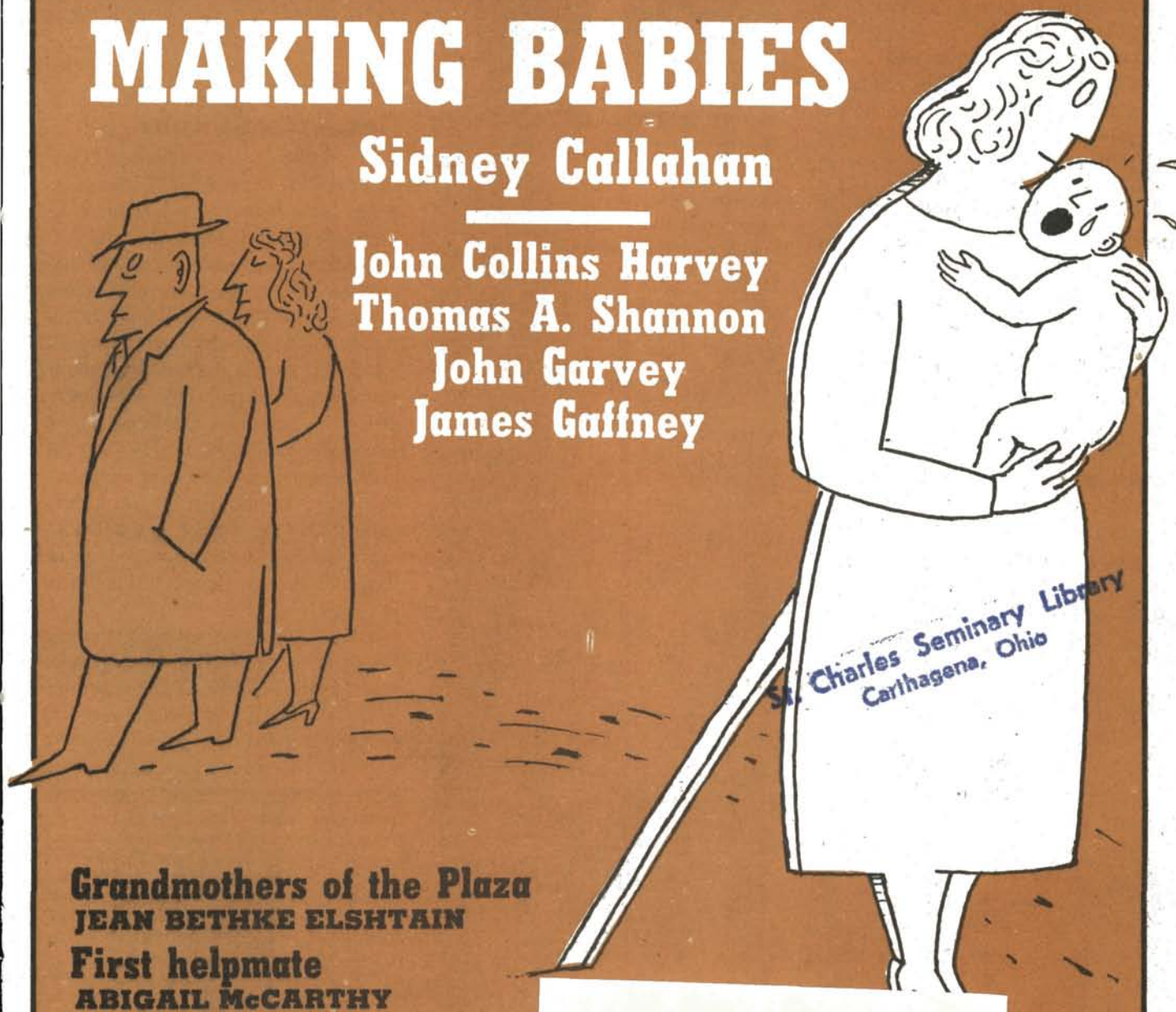
$1.50 April 24, 1987

COMMONWEAL

MAKING BABIES

Sidney Callahan

John Collins Harvey
Thomas A. Shannon
John Garvey
James Gaffney



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Grandmothers of the Plaza
JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

First helpmate
ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Stage
GERARD WEALES

Art
JAMES

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CORRESPONDENCE

Deterrence & peace

Park Forest, Ill.

To the Editors: The articles by Michael Gallagher and Edward Doherty ["Sidestepping the Challenge of Peace," and "A Classic Case of Consequentialism," January 16] will, I hope, give a much needed nudge to the bishops' committee that has been assigned the task of reevaluating the moral feasibility of nuclear deterrence. In all fairness to the pope, however, the conditional morality of deterrence did not spring full-grown from his brow on June 11, 1982. This alleged symptom of a "schizophrenic" magisterium dates back at least, and most definitively, to the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* of Vatican II. Although the council forcefully condemned all acts of total war, the view that deterrence may be "the most effective way by which peace of a sort can be maintained" was treated as if it were morally neutral. Thus, Mr. Gallagher's choice of "a bleak day for the Gospel as a whole and for moral theology in particular" would seem to be off its mark by more than fifteen years.

WILLIAM F. WOLFF

My own reservations

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Many thanks to Michael Gallagher and Edward Doherty for so clearly articulating my own doubts and reservations about the bishops' position on nuclear deterrence. Until now, my personal opposition was primarily instinctive, but these writers have pursued their theses with a logical precision that is irresistible.

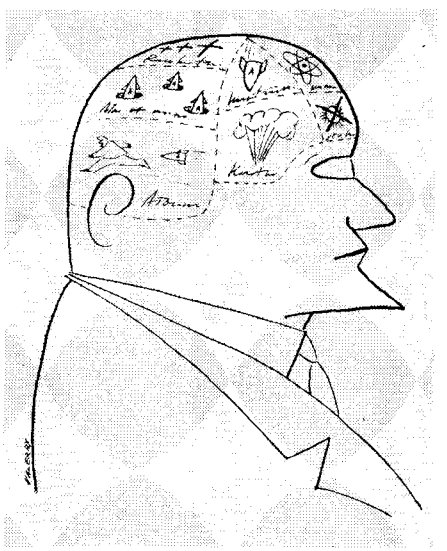
"Thou shalt not kill." Surely deterence involves the intent to break this commandment, because if it does not, it is meaningless. Idle threats are quickly discovered to be impotent, to the opponent's advantage.

What is the alternative, if disarmament means a Soviet attack? Perhaps it might be faith, and reliance on God, who protects and delivers the peacemakers, and welcomes them into his kingdom, which is not of this world. "What does it profit a man . . .?" A challenge that once ended on a cross for someone who refused to play political games at the risk of fatal compromise to his moral teaching. In his utter vulnerability he accepted the consequences, physical death. Yet was not the victory over evil his?

We live in fear of those who can destroy our bodies, so to live rationally we must construct a deterrent to prevent this possibility. But at what price, and at what a cost to our eternal souls?

Or do we really believe that there is no reality beyond this world? Let us be honest, and recognize where we stand on this basic issue. The consequences of the answer profoundly affect every moral act and decision of our lives. And in the case of nuclear deterrence, the lives of others as well.

PHYLLIS L. TOWNLEY



One must concur

Cape Breton Island, Canada

To the Editors: Michael Gallagher's "Sidesteppping the Challenge of Peace" is probably the best single piece of writing that I have seen on this topic.

"By their fruits you shall know them!" Until the Armed Forces begin systematically removing Catholics from any situation where they might be called upon to take part in nuclear destruction, one must indeed concur with the author's description of the bishops' statement: "It is the moral equivalent of a blank check."

JORDAN BISHOP

Respecting adults

Detroit, Mich.

To the Editors: As with many others who have tried to apply the judgment of the 1983 peace pastoral that deterrence is only morally acceptable in a strictly conditioned way, Michael Gallagher comes to the conclusion that the conditions insisted upon by the bishops are clearly not being met. Further, he sees that there is not even a faint hope that our government intends to meet these conditions in the foreseeable future. He suggests that the bishops should now issue an ultimatum of sorts to the government and clearly indicate that the current policy is definitely not morally acceptable, and that Catholics may not support this policy in any way.

I understand that such a statement would be supportive for many people, but I also have come to appreciate the value of a church where all are respected as adult members. The teaching is there

(Continued on page 252)

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COMMONWEAL

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World enough & time

When Canadian-Ukranian artist William Kurelek (who died of cancer in 1977) painted his "Nuclear Madonna" in April 1971, he based the scene on Matthew 24:19: Woe to those who have children at the breast on the last day. Fifteen years later, following the destruction of the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl, the Niagara Falls Art Gallery renamed Kurelek's painting the "Chernobyl Madonna." It is framed in a colorful Ukrainian pattern, one used often by Kurelek, and depicts a bald-headed mother in a green pasture giving suck to her deformed infant, another child begging for food at her side. The renamed painting is dedicated to those who have died, and to those who will.

If it is sometimes true that through dying others might be saved, the victims of Chernobyl may be prophetic indeed. One year after the disaster in the Ukraine, their voices still echo for those willing to hear. And for those willing to see, there are the hundreds hospitalized, the 135,000 evacuated, the farmland abandoned, the forests razed, the bodies buried. Chernobyl struck not only one country. Its radioactivity spread to at least twenty others. With it came the seeds of self-questioning and reappraisal, the moment nuclear power at last became a national and international focus of moral concern.

In the United States, according to the recent Worldwatch report *Reassessing Nuclear Power: The Fallout from Chernobyl,* there were 746 emergency shutdowns in nuclear power plants in 1985, up 28 percent from the year before. As nuclear plants grow older, the frequency of serious accidents is likely to increase. The combination of aging technology and human fallibility are apocalyptic indeed. Take the recent report of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on Philadelphia Electric Corporation's Peach Bottom plant. Last month the NRC disclosed that operators in the plant's control room periodically slept during the night shift. Would they have known what hit them? How many other nuclear madonnas might there have been in the shutting of an eye? Maybe we should bring home the marines. At least they don't sleep on duty.

Or do they? The Department of Energy (DOE) has just documented growing safety problems with its own military reactors. Earlier this year it had to shut down a reactor at Hanford, Washington, built for twenty years of service. The reactor, whose design bears similarities to the failed Chernobyl plant, is now twenty-three years old. And at the government's C Reactor at Savannah River, S.C., a different reactor design has developed a crack that is apparently irreparable, putting it out of commission. Furthermore, in March, DOE announced, under pressure from the National Academy of Sciences, that it would cut power sharply in its three operating plutonium-producing reactors because of concern that the reactors' emergency cooling system could not handle an accident. Senator John Glenn (D-Ohio) said at

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the time that the situation "borders on an emergency." Meanwhile, scores of incomplete commercial plants across the country, facing the public's lack of confidence as well as lowered electrical needs, are trying to sell their reactors to DOE for conversion to military reactors.

The cracks run deep. They may indeed be irreparable. But just as the verdant plant life in Kurelek's "Madonna" is lush and green from the clouds of nuclear fallout, so our insights from Chernobyl must continue to produce and prod necessary change.

THE GOOD NEWS ON 'MAN'

Bible translating is Bible interpreting. It was so when Luther, in his German New Testament, added the word "alone" to the phrase, "justified by faith," in the book of Romans. It was so when the Great Bible of Cromwell and Cranmer was revised to say, among other tidbits, that "Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches." It is so in the latest Roman Catholic translation of the New Testament in *The New American Bible* (currently available from Catholic Book Publishing Co.). This translation — worked on for six years by a committee of sixteen revisers and consultants, including four women — is expected to form the basis for a revised lectionary for liturgical use in Catholic churches throughout the U.S.

Improvements focused on the latest biblical scholarship, the demands for formality in liturgical proclamation, the burgeoning interest in private Bible study among Catholics, and the need for increased accuracy in adhering to the Greek text. These aims appear to have been largely achieved. Furthermore, because of two decades of concern over discrimination in language, especially discrimination against women, "the present translation attempts to display a sensitivity appropriate to the present state of the questions under discussion. . . ."

The "present state of the question," among both Protestants and Catholics (other than fundamentalists), is that more and more people of both sexes understand the words, "humans, persons, all, someone," etc., to include both sexes, while the term "man" is restricted to males. Therefore, in the new translation, the generic use of the English word "man" is generally avoided *when the meaning of the Greek is inclusive of both sexes*. Mind the italics.

What we have in this translation, brothers and sisters, is the most accurate English translation to date of the generic Greek word for human being, a word that for centuries was translated as "man," though English also has the term "human being" in its language. No longer will the Lenten epistle (Rom. 5:6) be read, "Christ died for us godless men," but as "Christ died for the ungodly." "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels" (1 Cor. 13:1) will now read, "If I speak in human and angelic tongues." "If you forgive men's sins they are forgiven them" (Jn. 20:23) will read, "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them." This is the good news.

Of course, there are problems. The first is a linguistic one. English simply doesn't have a gender-inclusive third-person pronoun, singular, and too often — despite the translators' pure motives — the generic term gets attached to a masculine pronoun ruining the inclusive effect. In the parable of the sower, for instance, the sower soon becomes "he." The same with the merchant of pearls, sheep-owners, landowners . . . all of whom, it could be argued, probably were male-dominated occupations in biblical times. But can that be said for someone who lights a candle? Who finds a buried treasure? Whose hand is malformed? Since this translators' problem is inevitable, it will be up to homilists, catechists, and leaders of prayer to reinforce the ambiguity that actually exists in Greek; alas, most are not even aware of the issue.

Other problems with this new translation are matters of interpretation. "The primary concern in this revision is fidelity to what the text says," the Preface states, as though the text were self-evident and not dependent upon interpretation. In fact, there is a set of assumptions underlying this translation — quite conservative as outlined in the Preface — which the reader should keep in mind.

The decision not to expand the form of address used most often by Paul in letters to the churches, and traditionally translated "Brothers," is disappointing and indefensible, especially in light of the translators' explanation: "There has never been any doubt that this designation includes *all* members of the Christian community, both male and female." We think the signs of the times read differently. The superior new lectionary now being distributed to parishes by the Lutheran Church in America, *Lectionary for the Christian People* by Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt (Pueblo, 1986) translates these salutations, "My dear people." It seems a shame that the Catholic bishops' liturgical office cannot simply approve this lectionary for use in Catholic dioceses since the text already includes Roman, Episcopal, and Lutheran readings, is handsomely bound and ready for use.

Less obvious, but critical to everyone interested in exploring the ministries in the early churches and expanding the ordained ministries in the present church, are two other decisions: (1) to refrain from using the term "deacon" in reference to Phoebe (Rom. 16:1) because, according to the translators, the actual order of deacons had not yet been established; and (2) to include (Rom. 16:15) a note regarding Junia — "a woman's name" — who is listed clearly as "prominent among the apostles." Why was "deacon" excluded, but "apostle" included? The inclusion of both might have been clearer.

On a grander scale was the decision not to change, restrain, or balance the masculine language for God, particularly the pronoun "he." Such changes were made in a National Council of Churches-approved lectionary in 1983 which stirred debate and even some professional scorn. For general parish use, we would have preferred what Lathrop and Ramshaw-Schmidt did: eliminating as many masculine pronouns for God as possible, without adding anything to the text.

Imagine a parish where all these concerns are discussed openly and regularly by Bible teachers, homilists, and in-

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formed laity. Then remember how many homilies you have heard recently shot full of exclusive language. Think of parishes where women do not enjoy visible positions of responsibility and leadership (the question of ordination aside). Recall that every Sunday we Catholics still recite, "all things were made for us men and our salvation." Isn't it obvious that the explicit inclusion of women everywhere the Greek does not exclude them from the text is basic to both an accurate translation of the New Testament and to pastoral necessity?

Since translations are lengthy, costly undertakings that take years to make their way into hymns, songs, prayers, and ultimately the hearts and minds of worshippers, it is too bad that this particular step forward — and it is a step forward — was not more sure-footed and bold.

REPORT FROM ARGENTINA

FINGERPRINTS ON FILE

THE SEARCH FOR MISSING CHILDREN

Amelia Herrera de Miranda is waiting for Matilde. The wait is tortuous for Mrs. Herrera, yet her days are filled with hope that somehow, before she dies, she will be reunited with a granddaughter she believes was kidnapped at the age of six months by the same military assault force that murdered her daughter, Barbara Miranda, her son-in-law, Roberto Lanoscou, and two other grandchildren, Roberto, age five, and Barbara, age four. That was on September 3, 1976, during Argentina's so-called "dirty war" when an out-of-control military junta kidnapped, tortured, and murdered thousands of Argentine citizens in a campaign against "subversives."

Although the terrible years of the so-called "Process" may have resulted in the deaths of known terrorists, most victims were rounded-up never to be heard from again simply because they were young (students were a particular target of the junta), or "progressive Catholics" (priests and nuns were not spared), or because an acquaintance under torture blurted out a name to stop his or her pain, or because a greedy military operative simply wanted to plunder a house.

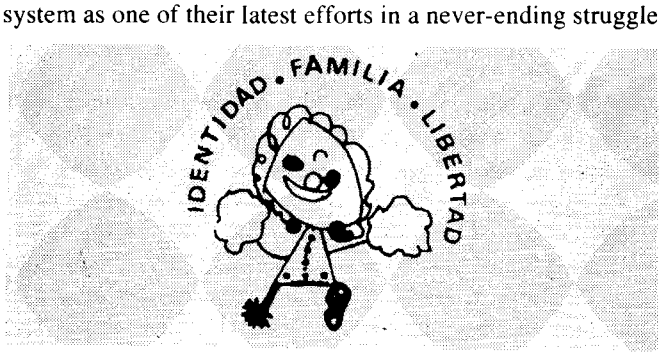
Children were not exempt. Some were killed. Others, especially babies and toddlers, were farmed out to military families to be raised on the hypothesis that this act of kindness saved them from their own politically incorrect, families.

Most horribly, pregnant female prisoners were sometimes kept alive until after they delivered. The mother was then murdered, the baby kidnapped or sold. This is the tragedy of Argentina's *niños desaparecidos*, its "disappeared children and babies." Matilde may be among several hundred, perhaps as many as 4,000 such *niños*. Amelia, her grandmother, a member of the *Abuelas*, Grandmothers of the Plaza, a group of grandmothers organized originally to fight the military and to try to locate their missing grandchildren, believes so . . . devoutly. The rest of her family was found buried in the same spot, the son-in-law, the daughter, the four- and five-year-old grandchildren. But there were no skeletal remains of a baby. It is this negative fact, and her solidarity with the *Abuelas*, that have kept Amelia going for a decade.

The logo of the *Abuelas* features an exuberant stick-like drawing of a happy child, grinning from ear-to-ear, arms outstretched, hands opened wide. Framing this sketch are the words: *Identidad, Familia, Libertad* — identity, family, liberty. The Grandmothers of the Plaza insist that their missing and possibly abducted grandchildren have not been "adopted"; they have been "kidnapped" in an act of aggression rather than adopted in an act of love. Thus far some thirty-nine disappeared grandchildren have been reunited with one or more of their grandparents. But hundreds are still unaccounted for. The *Abuelas* have enlisted teams of doctors, lawyers, psychologists, and geneticists to assist their search.

Even after they believe they have located a kidnapped grandchild, a complex process of establishing identity (kidnapped at six months, a child would now be a ten-year-old) and going through legal channels to get the child restored to his or her biological relatives must be laboriously pursued. Because, in most cases, the child's parents — the grandmother's own children — are among the tortured and murdered, restoration to the grandmother or grandfather means an unavoidably tragic dimension even if it is achieved. As the film, *The Official Story*, demonstrated, a kidnapped child may, in fact, be well loved by one or both of the parents who got the child under morally reprehensible circumstances. (The secretary of the *Abuelas*, Gustavo Mariani, a young man who is a godfather and uncle of disappeared babies, told me he rejected the film precisely *because* of the tragic moral ambiguity it portrayed once the child's grandmother turned up on the scene, for the "adopted" mother, and even the father who *knew* the child had been abducted, had indeed come to love and to cherish her.) For a child who has been ten years with one family, to be restored to a grandmother or grandfather who are strangers is bound to be wrenching. However, as I reflected further, it seemed to me even this may be less wrenching because the notion of blood and kin is *so* powerful in Argentina that the child herself or himself would surely be caught up in it and the transition, therefore, made easier. Or so I hoped.

The *Abuelas* have endorsed a sophisticated genetic identity system as one of their latest efforts in a never-ending struggle



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for restoration. It turns out that one's genetic inheritance is as unique and precise as a fingerprint, and, with the genetic typing from a single grandparent (out of a set of four, of course), using a method devised by a leading American geneticist, a child's biological identity can be determined beyond doubt.

Many *Abuelas* have gone through the genetic typing process and their genetic "fingerprint" is on file at a center in Buenos Aires. The grandmothers hope that, as abducted children grow older, vague memories may be rekindled or suspicions aroused as the children themselves learn more about the terrible years of the "Process." Perhaps children who sense something is "wrong" will go to the center to get their genetic code established. The *Abuelas* believe it is important the children know that their grandparents never stopped looking for them. The genetic identity code could serve as a sign to the grandchild that he or she was loved and sought after.

I spent several hours meeting with the Grandmothers of the Plaza during a trip to Buenos Aires in August 1986. I will long remember Amelia Herrera de Miranda as she recounted her terrible nightmares, slowly twisting a white linen handkerchief between her fingers, her voice quiet, her eyes filling with tears. She showed me pictures of her slaughtered family and a now-crinkled black-and-white snapshot of a tiny baby, her Matilde. When the military attacked her daughter's house, after they had killed at least four of the five family members, they stole what they could and then came with a bulldozer and razed everything. Nothing was left where a family once lived and a home once stood: "*Nada, nada,*" murmured Amelia. She lives daily with this image of obliteration and, with the other courageous and rare Grandmothers of the Plaza, she waits and prays and hopes.

"I hope you find Matilde," I told her as I left. There was nothing else to say. I reflected as I sat, shaken, in a nearby coffee shop, recalling the words I had heard, the stories I had been told, and looked once again through the *Abuelas,* book of *Niños Desaparecidos en la Argentina desde 1976,* on the living commitment to the identity of being an *Abuela* I had just witnessed. At a time in my own country when many grandparents, whether through choice, cultural pressure, or unfortunate exigency, have only the most tenuous ties to their grandchildren, or none at all, the *Abuelas* of Argentina have, first, risked their lives on behalf of their grandchildren, defying a violent, repressive regime by organizing in the late seventies; and, second, devoted their energy, their love, and their undying hope to search for their grandchildren for years, finding strength in their solidarity with one another.

For the *Abuelas,* truly "great-mothers," personal identity, family ties, and liberty are all of a piece and the basis of human existence. We, on the other hand, have constructed a cultural ethos that defines personal identity as that of a sovereign, untrammeled self, a being whose relations to others are incidental rather than essential. Family ties become a drag on the freedom of that sovereign self: something to get out of, reduce in their importance, or redefine as simply one choice among many. Liberty is entangled with the self-assertion of the mobile one rather than a shared affirmation of the interdependencies of family, friends, comrades. And then we wonder why life seems so empty somehow.

The Grandmothers of the Plaza, who may never again see, or touch, or hear their grandchildren, who have been deprived in the most cruel way imaginable of participating in the lives of those same children, would find our culturally-sanctioned severing of these basic ties and relationships inexplicable and cruel. Perhaps we can learn from the horror they have suffered and the hopes they cherish.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

Jean Bethke Elshtain is professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She is the author of Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought *(Princeton), and the newly-published,* Women and War *(Basic Books).*

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

FIRST HELPMATE

INFLUENCE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

To those of us who are periodically interviewed about it, it is a worn and tattered subject — that of the role of the First Lady of the United States and, by derivation, of all political wives. The questions and assumptions have been the same time after time over the last twenty years. Reporters and commentators, as one observer has said, flock after each other like blackbirds leaving a telephone wire.

The flurries have been many. They have for example, centered in the recent past around Lady Bird Johnson's reported lobbying against billboards and for other environmental issues, Betty Ford's support of the ERA, and Rosalynn Carter's insistence on attending cabinet meetings and having business lunches with her husband.

In the recent flap over Nancy Reagan, the only difference was that the venom of the attacks on her and the vigor of the denunciations have not been matched since the days of Eleanor Roosevelt. A slashing column by William Safire in the *New York Times* was reminiscent of the long-ago diatribes in the Hearst Press aimed at Mrs. Roosevelt, and the cruel swipes at her taken by Walter Winchell in his gossip column. It goes without saying that Mrs. Reagan is a far cry from being a Mrs. Roosevelt, but it is interesting that

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the outcry against her comes from the same kinds of sources: the predictably partisan, those whose concept of wifehood is the *Kinder, Kirche, Küche* variety — and, significantly, those "molders of public opinion" who seek to influence the president in another direction.

What exactly did the First Lady do? Desperate to help her slowly recuperating husband who seemed unable to comprehend and cope with the dimensions of the "Iranscam" scandal, she did what she could to have chief of staff Don Regan, whom she regarded as unhelpful and self- seeking, and his hand-picked aides, replaced. We can assume that she made representations to the president. We know that she reinforced her own attempt to influence him by "leaking" to favored journalists and meeting with at least one columnist whose subsequent strongly expressed views were undoubtedly called to the president's attention. In other words, she herself urged the replacement as strongly as she tactfully could, and then enlisted the help of friends. Does that go beyond what a wife should do?

Yes, said the conservatives in her husband's following. Yes, said right-wing columnists and TV personalities like Robert Novak who screamed (rather contradictorily) that she had no right to a stand because she was not elected, and that she had abused her "power." The fury of these most vociferous critics was fueled by their opposition to any arms control agreement and their perception that the effect of the Regan dismissal would be to further Nancy Reagan's supposed plans to secure one and make her husband a "peace president."

Interestingly enough, the right of Mrs. Reagan to influence her husband was defended by other political wives rather than the more vocal feminists (the "helpmate" wife is not in fashion), and by seasoned political reporters like Ken Bode and Lou Cannon. Said Cannon, a long time Reagan-watcher:

> Nancy Reagan's influence has been indisputable in only one arena: protection of her husband from personal staff and schedules that she considers detrimental to his well-being. Even here, perception sometimes exceeds reality. Her campaign to replace Regan was supported by more Republican leaders and presidential associates. It might not have succeeded except for the Tower report's finding. . . .

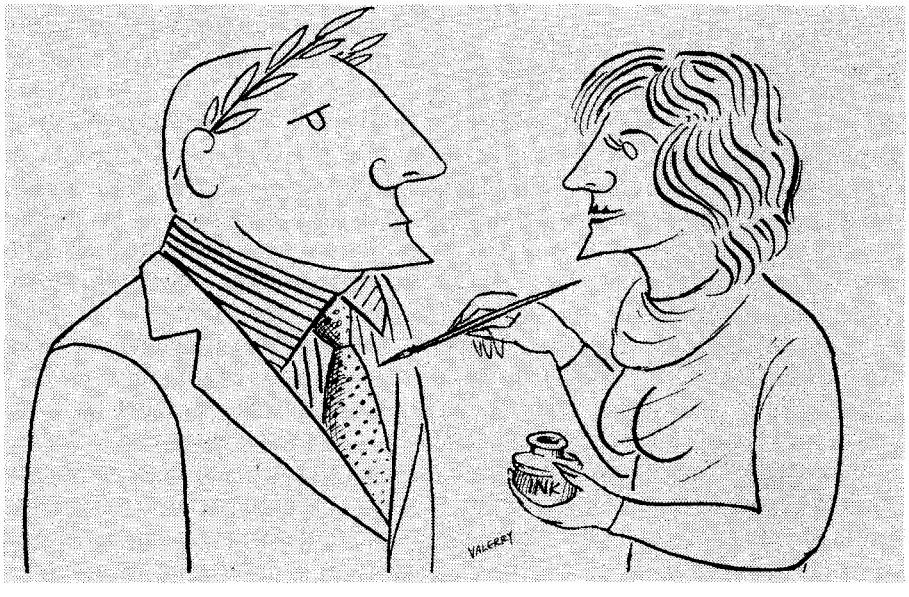
He remarked further that the new view of Mrs. Reagan as an arms control "specialist" has only "a snippet of reality." Of course, she wants her husband to be a peace president, "an unstartling view for first ladies in the nuclear age."

Bode amusedly made the point on the *Today Show* that first ladies may not be elected but that the voters know that they will get the wife with the husband and, if they don't want *her*, they don't have to elect *him*. They have plenty of time to see what they're getting. Furthermore, he noted, most presidential advisors aren't elected. Why should only the president's wife be precluded from advising on that account?

The crux of the matter is that we as a nation are very ambivalent about what we want from the First Lady. Although she is not elected or appointed we expect her to work for us. Being First Lady is not a casual or part-time occupation, but a full-time job. The elevation to high status comes quickly and, obviously, without any real preparation. In terms of public performance, the First Lady functions as representative of the nation. She welcomes heads of state, presides at state dinners, makes public appearances in person and through the media, attends local and national celebrations, and becomes the patroness of selected charities.

She is also expected to be a kind of national wife — the embodiment of American womanhood. In the waning years of the twentieth century the national wife cannot be confined to the private sphere. It is absurd to think that she should be. As First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt claimed the public sphere for wives once and for all. In doing so she altered the position of the political wife and what was expected of her. The wife who campaigns on her own, makes speeches on the issues, holds press conferences, assists in fundraising, and rallies support when her husband is running can hardly be expected to withdraw her interest once her husband has achieved office. Her participation once he is in office must be limited by her own interests and her husband's acceptance of her participation, not by any stereotypical prescription of role.

The time may soon be coming when an incoming First Lady will demand a public office of her own. (Mrs. Roosevelt held one briefly — as assistant director of the Office of Civilian Defense — but resigned because of the hostility of Congress.) Already Senate and House wives hold places in the cabinet, head the National Endowment for the Arts, and hold other appointments. When a First Lady follows in their footsteps we may have to employ a substitute national wife. And what a flurry there will be then!



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CONTRACTING ANGUISH

SARA, MELISSA, OR BABY M.?

Judge Harvey Sorkow's ruling in the Baby M. trial seemed a secular baptism, because now the public knows her as Melissa. The ruling hardly ends the controversy, however. The judge's decision that the contract between Mary Beth Whitehead and William Stern is valid raises profound and disturbing questions, and creates a dreadful precedent. Baby M. does not seem more like a real child to me now that I know her name; in the light of the judge's ruling Melissa Stern is a beloved, cherished commodity.

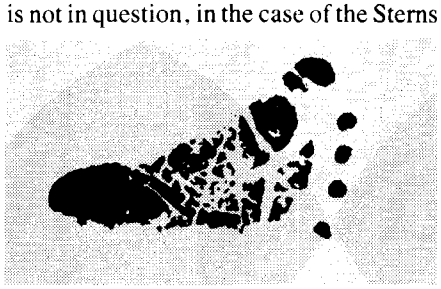
Consider the implications of the contract. Murray Kempton, in the April 9 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, quotes some of the language of this chilling document. For $10,000, placed in an escrow account, Mary Beth Whitehead was to "assume all risks, including the risk of death," involved in bringing William Stern's baby to birth. The contract specified that the fetus would be tested and, if "physiological abnormalities" were detected, would be aborted "upon demand of William Stern." In the event that Whitehead suffered a miscarriage or endured a mandated abortion after the fourth month of pregnancy, she would be paid $1,000.

I have a strong libertarian streak and ordinarily would be willing to agree that whatever goes on between consenting adults should be tolerated. There are limits to this, however. Our legal system does not allow a man to sell himself into slavery, no matter how much he might want to do so or how much a potential slave-owner might be willing to pay. (It could be argued that most of us rush into substitutes for honest, up-front slavery as a result of this prohibition, but that's another column.) In prohibiting slavery, our system is wise. The prohibition of slavery, even voluntary slavery, says something about what we think of humanity. Our system does not want to place human life at the level of a commodity; people are not, like cars or cattle, things to be bought and sold.

The concept of surrogate motherhood is a challenge to this assumption. In return for money, a woman allows her body to be rented, bears a child, and gives up a child for money. The child is reduced to the status of desirable item, someone who is, in the end, bought. Only a lawyer could fail to see how sickening this is.

I haven't touched yet on other obvious issues in the case — issues of class and sexual politics. Others have done so, but their arguments bear repeating: here you have an affluent couple who can afford to do so, paying a woman who needs the money to bear a child the wealthier woman is afraid to bear. Here a man is allowed to treat a woman, the natural mother of his child, with terrible callousness: didn't he pay her for her services, and isn't the child therefore his property?

I am not saying that the Sterns and Mary Beth Whitehead are willfully evil people. They are products of a stupid age. The culture we have drifted into can imagine no claim higher than individual desire, and no freedom other than the choice between alternatives which are in themselves neutral, their value depending only on our wills, our affections. The generous choice to have and raise a child is not in question, in the case of the Sterns or the Whiteheads. But the response to the emotions their choice engendered should be questioned seriously. More than their suffering is at stake here.



The defenders of the concept of surrogate motherhood point to the real, palpable anguish of infertile couples. They argue that abortion has made adoption a much less likely option for infertile couples, and they point out that technology now can make it possible to have a child who carries your genes, despite biological problems which would have made this impossible in past years.

The anguish is real, and the technology makes a solution possible. But what is the cost to society, when a paid-for baby can be aborted for being defective, and a woman whose womb is being rented can be obliged to abort, and at the same time is forbidden to form a loving attachment to the child she carries?

Perhaps the judge should have ruled that their behavior revealed the Sterns and the Whiteheads unfit to be parents; Melissa should have been put up for adoption by parents who do not see children as cherished products.

I hope the final reaction to this is the introduction of laws banning surrogacy, or at the very least banning it as a commercial enterprise. The law's only presence should be negative: contracts for surrogacy would be forbidden, surrogacy for money outlawed. Any surrogacy agreement would be entered into at the risk of all parties involved. If a surrogate mother decides that she can't bear to part with the child of her womb, too bad for the father. If the child is defective, no one has the right to force abortion, and there would be no money to forfeit. This raises the obvious question of legal protection for the children of such arrangements, but it can be argued that they would be no more at risk than children born into the normally messy, risky world of ordinary family life.

We now forbid women in every state but Nevada to rent their bodies for sex. Free love is at least not usually as steely-hearted as bought love. Because of the potential for heartbreak, because of what it says about our attitudes towards women, children, and humanity in general, surrogacy should be repudiated.

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LOVEMAKING & BABYMAKING

ETHICS & THE NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY

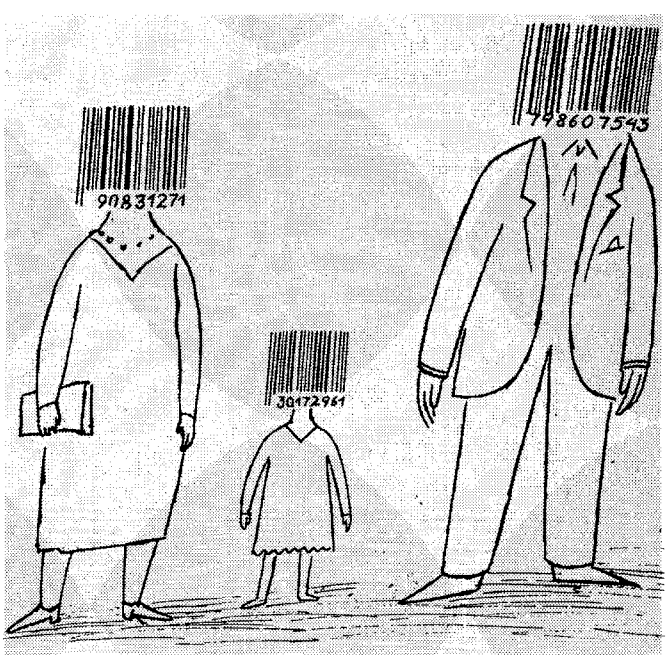
SIDNEY CALLAHAN

How should we ethically evaluate the new reproductive technologies developed to treat the increasing problem of human infertility? Our national debate over these troubling issues is just beginning. Right now there is a lacuna in law and regulatory procedures, while innovative medical practices proceed without ethical consensus. We find ourselves ethically perplexed because, as a society, we have not yet achieved cultural consensus on the ethics of reproduction and responsible parenthood.

One obvious sign of the society's unresolved conflicts over the morality of reproduction can be found in our bitter debates over abortion, contraception, and contraceptive education in the schools. Without societal consensus on the ethical use of medical technology to plan, limit, or interrupt pregnancies, we are ill-prepared to evaluate the newest alternative reproductive technologies which generate conception and pregnancies. At the same time we have seen rapid advances in regulating fertility, we have also experienced a cultural evolution of attitudes toward women, children, sexuality, and the family. These intersecting social developments have produced the pressing need to develop a new ethic of parenthood and responsible reproduction. But my focus here is upon the most recent challenge. How should we ethically assess the innovative array of techniques developed to overcome infertility — egg and sperm donations, surrogate mothers, in vitro fertilization, or embryo transplants?

Two inadequate assessments of the new alternative reproductive technologies are mirror images of each other in the narrowness of their focus and the limits of their analysis. On the one hand, a conservative approach adopts as a moral standard the biological integrity of the marital sexual act, which must not be tampered with for any reason; sexual intercourse and procreation must remain united in each marital act so that "lovemaking and babymaking" are never separated. In this "act analysis" no technological intervention in the sexual act is approved for any reason. Older arguments employed against artificial contraception are reiterated and applied to condemn any procedure separating functions which naturally occur together, i.e., all reproduction by in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, or third-party surrogacy are deemed immoral. The only ethical stance toward new reproductive technologies would be absolutely to cease and desist.

At the other extreme, a different form of "act analysis" focuses on the individual's desire for a child and the private arrangements made for reproduction. As long as due process and informed consent by competent adults are guarded by proper contracts, any adult should be able to engage in any alternative reproductive procedure technology can provide,



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and persons can sell or procure. This permissive stance is justified as an exercise of individual liberty, reproductive privacy, and reproductive right. The burden of proof in this argument falls to those who would limit alternative reproductive technology; potential regulators are enjoined to show that concrete harmful consequences will result from a particular practice. Of course, since there are as yet no existing consequences, it is impossible to *prove* harm before the fact. Even when there have been relevant cases, as in the example of children conceived by artificial insemination by donor (AID), no long-term in-depth studies have been made. Therefore, the response to alternative reproductive technologies has been to proceed full steam ahead — with due process.

Neither of these approaches to reproductive technologies is adequate. An ethic based solely on the natural biological integrity of marital acts will not serve because the mastery of nature through technological problem solving is also completely natural to our rational species; indeed, it is the glory of *homo sapiens*. Yet, because we are rational, we can also see that a fully permissive attitude toward reproductive technology presents its own severe problems. In the past, innovative uses of technology have resulted in ecological and ethical disasters. Abuses have been either fully intended, as with the Nazis, or inadvertent and accidental, as in the use of thalidomide. There is a grain of truth in the warning that "control of nature" can be a euphemism for the control of some people by other, more powerful people. Technology must be ethically assessed and rationally controlled. Faced with new reproductive technologies, we should not let the technological imperative (what can be done should be done), fueled in this case by individual desires, decide the question of whether a course of action is right or good.

What the market will bear

Nearly five hundred children have been born to surrogate mothers. Clinics and brokerage agencies have been set up to meet the rising demand; a surrogate advocacy group has been formed. The process may not yet be commonplace, but it has caught the public imagination and resonates with the current emphasis on entrepreneurial activity. One editorial cartoon pictured a greeting card section for "Surrogate-Mother's Day," "surrogate-mothers' birthdays," etc., showing what complications — as well as marketing possibilities — await us. One disturbing factor underlying the entire discussion of surrogacy deserves a closer look: society has become increasingly comfortable with the "commodification" of persons.

Karl Marx noted that an object becomes a commodity when it has exchange value through its position in the market. This means that it has gone beyond what it was designed to do and now has value because of the possibility of exchanging it for something else, money for example. Thus, the value of the object is determined not by its use-value, but by its market value — for what else or how much it can be exchanged.

People also are subject to commodification. They can be reduced to means and not seen as ends in their own right. Calculation can enter into all aspects of personal relations and radically transform them into relations between buyer and seller, which may then be accepted as normal. Such commodification does not appear alien, particularly in capitalistic societies, but rather as the way things are.

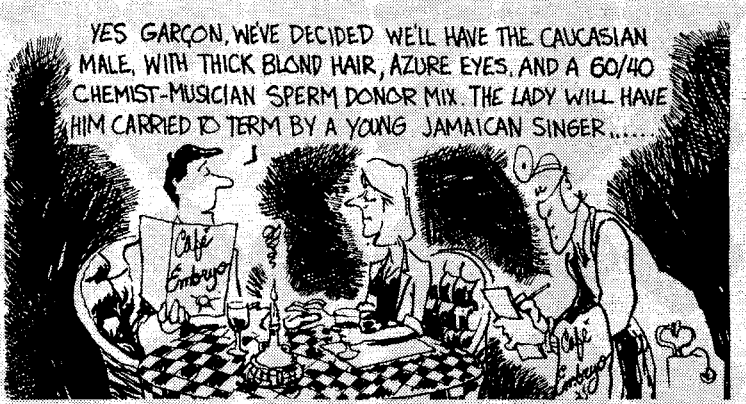
While persons can be valued for human characteristics, such as honesty, love, and sympathy, they can also have an exchange value, i.e., the value the person possesses when acquired as a good. Persons are reduced to commodities when they are valued only with respect to their utility or exchange value.

Immanuel Kant articulated a similar view in arguing against prostitution:

> To let one's person out on hire and to surrender it to another for the satisfaction of his sexual desire in return for money is the depth of infamy. . . . The body is part of the self; in its togetherness with the self it constitutes the person. . . .

For Marx and Kant, prostitution is the paradigm of alienation because one becomes a commodity and creates a gap between body and self. The self becomes alienated because one becomes a means and not an end.

This theory of alienation was developed in the light of the industrial revolution and the beginnings of laissez-faire capitalism. Its full understanding needs to be set within a theory of human nature, a model of society, and a theory of labor. In 1953, C. Wright Mills (*White Collar: the American Middle Class*, Oxford) adapted these concepts to white-collar labor. In contrast to preindustrialized societies, in which individuals traded or sold commodities to each other, in industrialized societies, the workers sell


YES GARÇON, WE'VE DECIDED WE'LL HAVE THE CAUCASIAN MALE, WITH THICK BLOND HAIR, AZURE EYES, AND A 60/40 CHEMIST-MUSICIAN SPERM DONOR MIX. THE LADY WILL HAVE HIM CARRIED TO TERM BY A YOUNG JAMAICAN SINGER.....
Café Embryo
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their labor and services. In modern bureaucratized organizations, workers — particularly white-collar workers — sell their social personality. This is a consequence of being in a society dominated not only by the market, but by a marketing ideology: anything can be sold with the right methods of influence.

In modern bureaucratized society, there are two opposing tendencies: the impersonality of relations because of market influences and the marketing strategy of having people in sales act as if they are personally engaged with the customer. Thus, personality traits become commodities on the labor market.

Knowing that personality is what influences the sale, a sales person may transform his or her own personality into an instrument designed to generate sales. Thus, the sales person becomes alienated from self. The customer knows of the instrumentality of the salesperson's personality and serves as a mirror which reflects this to the sales person. But the customer also wishes to hide from the fact that the sales person is trying to exploit him or her, and develops a counter-personality to manipulate the sales person. Each is estranged from the other as alienation of the worker and commodification of the person become the norm.

Though contemporary labor differs from the artisan of the preindustrial age and the body-breaking work of early capitalism, it commodifies workers through the development of the market personality. Commodification can affect the rest of one's life by introducing the suspicion that all interpersonal relations are characterized by such exploitation. Clearly, the problems associated with surrogate motherhood amplify such suspicions.

THOMAS A. SHANNON

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One troubling tactic used by those urging the permissive acceptance of all new reproductive technologies is that arguments are based upon analogies from adoption or other child-rearing arrangements that arise from divorce, death, desertion, or parental inadequacy. Much is made of the cases in which persons cope with single parenthood, or successfully adopt, or adjust to other less than ideal situations. But the adequacy of "after the fact" crisis management does not justify planning beforehand to voluntarily replicate similar childrearing situations. Emergency solutions make poor operating norms. Heretofore we have not ethically or legally faced the practice of deliberately conceiving a child in order to give it to others for adoption, with, or without, payment. We have forbidden the selling of babies, and the purchase of brides, sexual intercourse, and bodily organs; certain values have been preserved by these existing norms. How can ethical guidelines for employing alternative reproductive methods strengthen rather than threaten our basic cultural values?

In the case of reproductive technology, ethical positions best emerge from the question: What will further the good of the potential child, the family, and the general social conditions of childrearing, while strengthening our moral norms of individual responsibility in reproduction? We should move beyond a narrow focus upon either biology or individual desires for children. In such a serious matter, it is prudent to look first to the values and goods safeguarded in the present operating norms of reproduction and childrearing, before contemplating radical alterations. Similarly, the burden of proof should be upon those who wish to experiment with the lives of others. Without considering here the ethical problem concerning the justice of allocating medical resources to increase individual fertility in an overpopulated world, I think the correct statement of the ethical question is whether, or how far, present norms should be altered.

It is ethically appropriate to use alternative reproductive technologies if, and only if, such technologies are making it possible for a normal, socially adequate, heterosexual married couple to have a child as they would, or could, if their infertility were not an obstacle. Infertility is clearly an unfortunate dysfunction or handicap for a married couple, which medicine may sometimes remedy. It seems almost miraculous that medical technology can often overcome a couple's infertility and restore normal function, with techniques such as artificial insemination by husband (AIH) or in vitro fertilization (IVF) or tubal ovum transfer methods.

However, a remedial standard based upon operating cultural norms maintains the unity of genetic, gestational, and rearing parents, and requires that parents be alive and well, in an appropriate time in their lifecycle, and possess average or adequate psychological and social resources for childrearing. Helping the severely retarded, the mentally ill, the genetically diseased, the destitute, the aged, or a widow with a dead spouse's sperm, to have the child they otherwise could not, would not be ethically acceptable by this standard. Nor would it be acceptable to alter "average expectable conditions" by efforts to produce multiple births, or routinely to select for sex. The power to intervene makes medical professionals and medical institutions into morally responsible trustees of a potential child's future. As trustees, medical professionals have a moral duty not to take risks on behalf of unconsenting others.

Medical professionals should be ethically guided by a form of "substituted communal judgment" informed by our cultural values and norms. What would responsible parents-to-be deem ethically appropriate reproductive behavior in a particular case? Physicians or other health care personnel can hardly, in conscience, cooperate with, and make possible, irresponsible or ethically inappropriate reproductive acts affecting innocent new lives. Socially informed ethical judgments on behalf of the society are unavoidable. Ethical standards which protect and strengthen positive outcomes for children, childrearing

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conditions, and cultural norms of responsible parenthood, should be used to judge the appropriateness of a particular request for treatment of infertility.

The claim that an individual's right to reproduce would be violated if fertility treatments are not available to any individual who requests them, seems wrongheaded. The right to marry, for example (itself not absolute), does not obligate society to provide spouses. Moreover, society has already decided that when adequate childrearing, and the well-being of children are at stake, social and professional intervention is justified. Adoption procedures, custodial decisions, and the child abuse laws are examples of the right and duty of professionals to make judgments on the fitness of parents. And as child abuse and the deaths of children regularly attest, it is far better to err on the side of safety than take risks. Should not medical professionals be similarly responsible in carrying out the interventions which will, in essence, give a couple a baby to rear? Then, if a couple is judged to be within the normal range of average expectable parents, remedial techniques maintaining the unity of genetic, gestational, and rearing parentage — techniques such as AIH or IVF or tubal ovum transfer — would be ethically acceptable.

Employing third-party donors or surrogate mothers is not ever, in my opinion, an ethically acceptable use of reproductive technologies. Procedures using donors and/or surrogates, separate and variously recombine the source of sperm, eggs, embryos, gestational womb, and rearing parents. Such a separation — whether in artificial insemination by donor (AID), embryo transplants, or surrogate mothers — poses too many ethical and social risks to the dignity and well-being of the future child, the donor, individual spouses, the family as a whole, and our cultural ethos. To argue the case against third-party donors, even for acceptable couples, we need to focus upon what values, goods, and safeguards have been inherent in the cultural norm — two heterosexual parents who are the genetic, gestational, and social parents of their child.

The advantages and safeguards of having such parents are manifold, basic, and not accidental in biological and cultural evolution. Mammalian "in vivo" reproduction and primate parent-child bonding provide adaptive means for protection, defense, and complex socialization of offspring. With the advent of long-living rational animals, such as the human species, the basic primate models are broadened and deepened into a family unit, now including the great cultural leap forward to include fathers and additional kinship bonds. Two heterosexual parents supported by kin and clan engage in even more arduous parenting, nurturing the young over an extended period. The nuclear family is founded on biology, but it is as a cultural invention — with psychological and social effectiveness in generating responsibility, socialization, and deep altruistic bonds — that the family has remained universal.

Why has the norm of the nuclear family worked for so long and held first place in the cultural competition? The western cultural ideal, slowly winnowed of patriarchy as it has recognized the equality of women and children, has ensured far more than law, order, and social continuity. As the heterosexual couple freely choose each other, they make a loving commitment to share the vicissitudes of life. Bonded in love and legal contract they mutually exchange exclusive rights, giving each other emotional and economic priority. Love, sexuality, and procreation are united in openness to children, who then have a claim to equal parental care from both father and mother. In addition, the extended family of both parents is important as a support to the couple, especially in cases of death or disaster.

No "act analysis" of one procreative period of time in a marriage can do justice to the fact that the reproductive couple exists as a unit within a family extended in time and kinship. Grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, cousins, and other relatives are important in family life for both pragmatic and psychological reasons. Individual identity is rooted in biologically based kinship and small cooperating social units of invested relationships. The family is one remaining institution where status is given by birth, not earned or achieved. Psychologically and socially the family gives emotional connections, social purpose, and meaning to life. Those individuals who do not marry and found families, or those elites who achieve membership in larger communities, are still strongly connected to others through their families. Each human being exists within a social envelope and must do so to flourish; the family provides one of the most important elements in a human life. But as a cultural invention, why must a "family" be based upon biological kinship? Cannot any persons who declare themselves a family be a family?

While the internalized psychological image, idea, and intention to belong to a family does partially constitute a family, there is no denying the bond created by genetic kinship. One definition of the family is those people who share genes. In fact, the unwillingness of infertile couples to adopt and the struggle to have their own baby are testimony to the existence of what appears to be a strong innate urge to reproduce one's self. Culturally, this is understood as the fusion of two genetic heritages so that the child is situated within two lineages. These may both be supportive, or one may be more important than the other, but having two sets of kin provides important social resources; the child is heir to more than money or property when it is situated in a rooted kinship community.

The search by adopted children for their biological parents and possible siblings reveals the psychological need of humans to be situated and to know one's origins. When there is a third-party donor(s) or sperm, eggs, embryo, the child is cut off from either half or all of its genetic biological lineage. If deception is practiced about the child's origins, then both the child and the extended family have been wronged by the lie. Since family secrets are rarely kept completely, the delayed revelations produce disillusionment and distrust among those

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deceived. When a child or relatives are not lied to, the identity of the donor(s) becomes an issue for all concerned. The much discussed case of the Whitehead-Stern court struggle is an example of the divisive chaos, struggle, and suffering possible in surrogate arrangements.

In the average situation, two parents with equal genetic investment in the child are unified by their mutual relationships to their child. They are irreversibly connected and made kin through the biological child they have procreated. Their love, commitment, and sexual bond have been made manifest in a new life. Their genetic link with the child, shared with their own family, produces a sense of family likeness and personal identification, leading to empathy and affective attunement. The child's genetic link to each spouse and his or her kin, strengthens the marital bond. The marital gestation of their mutually conceived new life during pregnancy also unites the couple and prepares them for the parental enterprise. Since we are embodied creatures, the psychological bonds of caring and empathy are built upon the firm foundation of biological ties and bodily self-identity.

When technological intervention without donors, such as AIH or IVF or tubal ovum transfer, is used to correct infertility, the time, money, stress, and cooperative effort required by these procedures focuses the couple upon their marital relationship and their equal and mutual contribution to childrearing. The psychological bonding between them can transcend the stress endured and the less than ideal technological interventions in their sexual lives. The result of their joint effort, as in natural parenting, will be a baby they are equally invested in and equally related to. (In adoption, both parents are also equal in their relationship to the child they are jointly rescuing.) With equal investment in their child, both parents are equally responsible for childrearing and support.

With third-party genetic or gestational donors, however, the exclusive marital unity and equal biological bond is divided. One parent will be related biologically to the child; the other parent will not. True, the bypassed parent may have given consent, but consent, even if truly informed and uncoerced, can hardly equalize the imbalance. While there is certainly no real question of adultery in such a bypassing situation,

"No, no – I'm Mummy, this is Biological Mummy, this is Donor Daddy, and that's Daddy."

nevertheless, the intruding third-party donor, as in adultery, will inevitably be a psychological reality in the couple's life. Even if there is no jealousy or envy, the reproductive inadequacy of one partner has been reified, and superseded by an outsider's potency, genetic heritage, and superior reproductive capacity. Fertility and reproduction have been given an overriding priority in the couple's life.

Such asymmetry has always been problematic, from Cinderella to today's stepparents and reconstituted families. The most frequently cited causes of divorce in second marriages are the difficulties presented by another person's children. Empathy, identification, a sense of kinship, and assurance of parental authority arise from family likeness and biological ties. In families under stress in which biological kinship is absent, one finds more incest, child abuse, and scapegoating. Biological ties become psychologically potent, because human beings operate as imagining, fantasizing persons in their emotional interactions with one another and with their children. Fantasies about a child's past and future do make a difference, as all students of child development or family dynamics will attest. Third-party donors and surrogates cannot be counted on to disappear from family consciousness, even if legal contracts could control other ramifications or forbid actual interventions.

The most serious ethical problems in using third-party donors in alternative reproduction concern the well-being of the potential child who is being made party to a social experiment without his or her consent. While no child is conceived by its own consent, a child not artificially produced is at least born in the same way as its parents and all other persons normally have been. A child who has donor(s) intruded into its parentage will be cut off from its genetic heritage and part of its kinship relations in new ways. Even if there is no physiological harm to the child, the psychological relationship of the child to its parents is endangered — with or without the practice of deception and secrecy about its origins.

It should be clear that adoption, which is a rescue of a child already in existence, is very different ethically from planning ahead of time to involve third-party donors in procuring a child. The adopted child, while perhaps harboring resentment against its birth parents, must look at its adopters differently from parents who have had him or her made to order. The "commodification of the child," drafting a child definitively into the service of parental will, is an infringement upon the child's dignity. When one is begotten not made, then one shares equally with one's parents in the ongoing transmission of the gift of life from generation to generation. Alternative reproductive techniques made available to single men or women, or to homosexual couples, will endanger the child's status as having been engendered as a gift of a prior, ongoing, transcendent marital relationship. Why should a child, in its creation, be treated as a property, or product, or a means to satisfy the wishes of powerful adults? Even in natural reproduction, we now consider it ethically suspect to attempt to

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have a child because an adult wants to satisfy some personal need or desire.

Unfortunately we are still saddled with residual ideologies which view children as a form of personal possession. Only gradually have we welcomed children as gifts, new lives given in trusteeship, who are equal to adult persons in human dignity, despite their dependency and powerlessness to determine their own fate. In the past some persons have wanted children to secure an inheritance, prove sexual prowess, procure a scapegoat, gain revenge, increase marital power, secure social prestige, or have someone of their own to love.

The motives for conception influence the future relationships of child to parent. A couple absolutely driven to have a child, in the obsessive way some couples become when faced with infertility, may not be prepared to rear the actual child once it is born. Being wanted and being well-reared are not identical. The child who was wanted for all the wrong reasons may be pressured to live up to parental demands or dreams of the perfect child. The question of outright rejection of imperfect or non-optimal babies contracted for by alternative reproductive technology is also a difficulty.

In alternative reproduction the question of "Whose baby am I?" becomes inevitable. The need to know about potential half-siblings and other kinship relationships may become urgent at a point in later development. From the child's point of view the asymmetry of relationships with one's rearing parents is also a factor. Even if the Freudian psychoanalytic account of Oedipal family relationships is not correct in all its details; there still exist extremely complex fantasies and psychological currents to be settled in the family triangles of mother, father, and child. Having two parents, one of each sex, with whom one can safely identify, love, and leave behind, is a great advantage.

Procuring donors of sperm, eggs, embryos, or wombs is an essential component of collaborative reproduction. Yet encouraging persons to give, or worse, to sell their genetic or gestational capacity attacks a basic foundation of morality — that is, taking responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. Adult persons are held morally responsible for their words and deeds. In serious matters with lifelong, irreversible consequences, we rightly hold persons to high standards of moral and legal responsibility. To counter the tendency or temptation toward sexual irresponsibility or parental neglect, western culture has insisted that men and women be held accountable for their contribution to the creation of new life.

A donor, whether male or female, who takes part in collaborative reproduction *cannot* assume personal responsibility for his or her momentous personal action engendering a new life. In fact, the donor contracts to abdicate present and future personal responsibility. A donor is enjoined to hand over to physicians or others, often unknown others, his or her personal genetic heritage and reproductive capacity. This genetic generative capacity is not like a kidney, or any other organ, but is a form of basic identity received from one's own parents. When a person gives this capacity away, or sells it, he or she breaks an implicit compact. Parental responsibility has been seen as the essential form of the natural responsibility of human beings as members of humanity, a moral claim not superseded by other contracts or commitments.

If we succeed in isolating sexual and reproductive acts from longterm personal responsibility, this moral abdication will exacerbate existing cultural problems. Do we want to encourage women to be able psychologically to distance themselves from the child in their womb enough to give it up? Do we wish to sanction male detachment from their biological offspring? Already epidemics of divorce, illegitimate conceptions, and parental irresponsibility and failures are straining the family bonds necessary for successful childrearing. If we legitimate the isolation of genetic, gestational, and social parentage and govern reproduction by contract and purchase, our culture will become even more fragmented, rootless, and alienated.

One of the foundations of a responsible ethic of sexuality has been to see sexual acts as personal acts involving the whole person. It seems wrong and alienating to isolate a person's reproductive capacity from his or her personal life and identity. When a woman donates her egg and gestational capacity, there is a particular danger of exploitation, feminists have warned. The physiological risks and drastic intervention in a woman's reproductive system needed for surrogacy or embryo transplants are considerable. But more telling, psychologi-

Diagnosing the Vatican 'Instruction'

Marvelous advances in molecular biology and medical practice have changed our concepts of biological life in the same fashion that the brilliant advances in astronomy have changed our concepts of the cosmos. The role of the physician is to apply these biological and medical advances to the clinical situation, to bring cure of disease, and if such is not feasible, comfort, care, and relief from suffering, both physical and mental. This is entirely consistent with the dignity of the human being and the role of the physician. Just as Jesus healed in his earthly ministry, so the physician must heal in his or her vocational calling.

Medical science has developed a technique to overcome a certain type of sterility in married couples specifically when the oviducts of the wife are totally obstructed by a disease process or are entirely missing as a result of congenital malformation. Eggs can be harvested from the ovaries of the wife under certain conditions and may be fertilized in vitro by the sperm of the husband, obtained by masturbation. This process is called in vitro fertilization or IVF. The fertilized eggs may then be transferred back to

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the wife's womb and can proceed to develop as a normal pregnancy, a process known as embryo transfer or ET.

The Vatican "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation" indicates that such fertilization is in itself illicit and in opposition to the dignity of procreation and of the conjugal union even when everything is done to avoid the death of the human embryo. The argument is that this procedure separates the procreative meaning from the unitive meaning in marriage.

The condemnation of artificial contraception by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was made because artificial contraception deliberately deprives the conjugal act of its openness to procreation and thus disassociates the goods and meanings of marriage.

The intention is quite different for the married couple seeking IVF to create new life. Certainly in the totality of the marriage union the mutual giving of one to another in love is present in the marriage. The procreation is within the marriage. Mutual love is expressed in the grave suffering of the wife in the harvesting of her eggs and in the husband in the production of his sperm. It would appear that the moral evaluation of the physical act should be made in regard to its intentionality, as was the case in *Humanae Vitae*.

Scientific medical paradigms, as well as theological paradigms, change. Human search and discovery find deeper insights into the workings of nature. In other words, right reason finds and explicates what has been hidden and unknown in God's good creation. New medical discoveries and methodologies can be utilized to relieve suffering and are mediated by the physician as gifts of a loving Creator. Even the "Instruction" paradoxically admits that the child who is a product of IVF and ET must still be considered a "gift from God."

Catholic physicians like myself will take seriously the authentic magisterial teaching of the "Instruction" in obedience to Jesus the healer. The plea of this physician is that the theologians will look again at the discoveries and new insights into nature made by medical scientists which, if applied to the human condition, will alleviate human suffering which heretofore was not relievable and curable. In light of these new abilities and understandings, theologians must reflect whether what was considered under older theological paradigms to be illicit is now in fact and actuality theologically licit.

JOHN COLLINS HARVEY, M.D.

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cally, is that pregnancy is not simply a neutral organic experience, but a time of bonding to a child.

If a great deal of money is offered for surrogacy, needy women will be tempted to sell their bodies and suffer emotional consequences — and the experience of prostitution leads one to expect that many of these women will be handing over their money to males. Feminists rightly protest that allowing women to be surrogates will turn some women into babymachines bought and regulated by those rich enough to pay. From another perspective, the woman could also be seen as deliberately producing and selling her baby. What will these practices do to the other children a surrogate may have, or for that matter to other children in the culture? Can children comprehend the fact that mothers make babies and sell them for money? The great primordial reality of interdependency and mutual bonding represented by mother and child is attacked. Contracts and regulations can hardly stem the psychological and social harm alternative reproductive technologies make possible.

In conclusion, society is facing another challenge to its traditional understanding of the ethics of reproduction and the norms of the family. Cultural norms, based upon biological predispositions, have been selected for the unity of genetic, gestational, and rearing marital units within an extended-family kinship system. The family must be seen as an intergenerational institution existing through time and space in ecological relationship with the society.

As ethical understanding has broadened to include the dignity, worth, and rights of women and children, so our understanding of morally responsible parenthood has been refined and developed. The parental enterprise is rightly seen as basically an altruistic one — children should not be viewed as a form of personal property, or as a means to satisfy adult desires or needs. The good of the potential child, and the cultural conditions which further childrearing and family support systems, should take precedence over other considerations.

I have argued for limits to alternative reproductive techniques which remedy infertility. Strictly limiting and monitoring these reproductive techniques will serve the good of the potential child, the family, and the need of the culture for morally responsible reproductive behavior.

It seems a sign of cultural progress that children are highly valued and infertility is acknowledged as a misfortune. It is also wonderful that medical reproductive technology can remedy the handicap of an infertile couple. But as medical professionals and the society as a whole confront these innovative interventions, the ethical, psychological, and cultural dimensions of technological procedures cannot be discounted. Everything that can be done to satisfy individual reproductive desires should not be done. As Gandhi said, "means are ends in the making." Collaborative reproduction using third-parties will come at too high a price.

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HAGAR & HER SISTERS: PRECEDENT FOR CONDUCT

SURROGATE MOTHERHOOD IN THE BIBLE

JAMES GAFFNEY

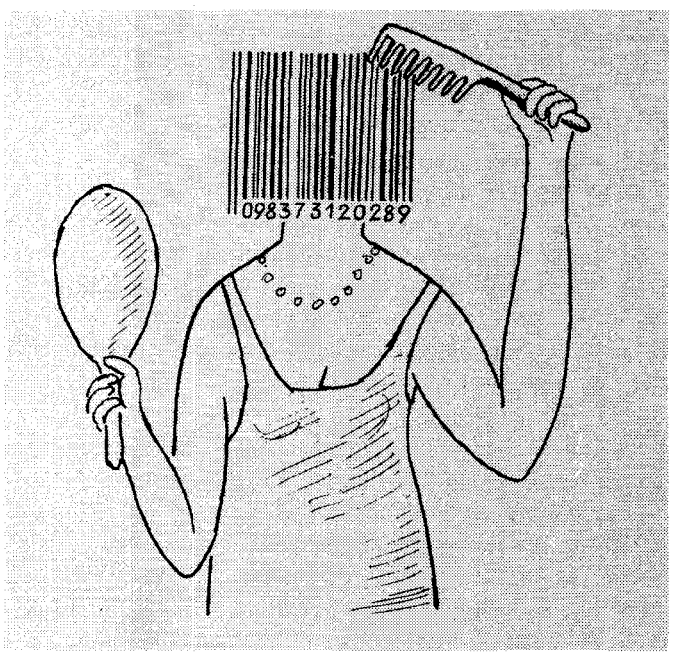
However new, threatening, or wonderful surrogate motherhood may at first appear to the modern biologist, jurist, or moralist, readers of the Bible have reason to reflect that little more than the jargon is new. Surrogacy itself is remarkable for its antiquity. In some of the records of remotest history we are informed that situations arose, and complications developed out of them, that are strikingly suggestive of those under discussion today. The apparently earliest recorded case of surrogate motherhood took an unanticipated turn of which the Baby M. affair is strongly reminiscent.

Abram's wife Sarai, we are told in Genesis 16, wanted to be a mother but could not have a baby. So she adopted a recognized expedient by having a slave woman, Hagar, serve as a surrogate mother — not, of course, for $10,000, and by natural rather than artificial insemination. However, when Hagar experienced the pride and prestige of carrying her master's child, her surrogate role no longer sufficed. She rejoiced in and boasted of her motherhood, to the discomfiture and indignation of Sarai. Abram unheroically gave his embittered wife her way, and the pregnant Hagar became a refugee, rescued ultimately by angelic intervention. The subsequent fate of Hagar and of her Ishmael is described five chapters later. As is well known, a further development became important in the lore of Islam, which laid claim to Abrahamic ancestry through Ishmael.

Had we only the Hagar story to illustrate surrogate motherhood in biblical narrative, we might be left to suppose that the practice was a bizarre aberration, disapproval of which was intimated by its outcome. But the practice appears again, two patriarchal generations later, and this time things go much more smoothly. Once again a wife wanted to be a mother and could not have a baby, and this time it was the beautiful bride for whose hand Jacob labored and endured so much. Rachel's impatience over her childlessness was exacerbated by the impressive fertility of Leah, her elder sister, who had earlier become Jacob's wife (Gen. 30). So once again a slave woman, Bilhah, was conscripted to serve as a surrogate mother. Bilhah's narrowly restricted gestatory function is made quite unambiguous by Rachel's words to her husband: "Go in to her that she may bear upon my knees, and even I may have children through her" (Gen. 30:3). Accordingly, when the child is born, it is Rachel, not Bilhah who names him.

Bilhah, moreover, was no Hagar, and no thoughts arose of overstepping her surrogate restrictions. Soon afterwards, therefore, the successful arrangement was repeated and Rachel rejoiced, in frankly athletic terms, that Leah was losing her edge in the contest of maternity: "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed" (Gen. 30:8). Nevertheless, two could play at Rachel's game. So, even after the loss of her own fertility, Leah twice made use of a slave woman of her own, Zilpah, as a surrogate mother, producing two more sons for Jacob. Soon thereafter, still another note of supposed modernity is struck when what we should describe as a fertility drug, mandrake root, is employed, apparently by both women, who are thus enabled to do without surrogate mothers, Leah producing two more sons and a daughter, and Rachel another son (Gen. 30:14-24). Her last son was born long afterwards (Gen. 35:18).

For one who reads these patriarchal legends in the midst of



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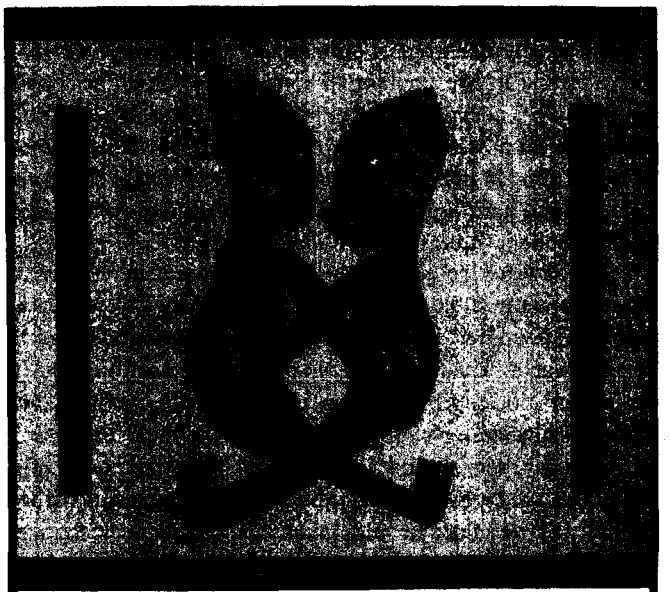
current agitation over departures from ordinary conjugal reproductive procedures, it is hard to suppress the whimsical reflection that, taking these narratives simply as they stand, we should have to credit surrogate motherhood with the eponymous ancestry of fully one-third of the traditional tribes of Israel (Dan and Naphtali by Rachel's arrangement with Bilhah; Gad and Asher by Leah's with Zilpah), not to mention that wild and wandering desert stock of Ishmael. There is, as already remarked, a curious similarity between trouble surrounding Ishmael's parentage and the current controversy about Baby M.'s. In both cases, contrary to expectations, a surrogate mother ceased to regard her biological role as merely instrumental to another woman's maternal ambitions, but reinterpreted it in terms of her independent purposes and values. Different motives seem to have been operative, inasmuch as Hagar relished motherhood as raising her social dignity, whereas that was not a factor for Mary Beth Whitehead, who was simply unwilling to surrender for a set price a baby she had come to regard as her own.

Oddly enough, though, there is reason to believe that the basic complication common to both cases — a surrogate mother's maternal self-assertion — is proving to be a thornier issue for modern than for ancient law. The Bible itself does not contain actual legislative provisions for surrogate motherhood, nor does it expressly identify that practice as a customary social institution. It does, however, record the instances already cited as though they belonged to a recognized pattern of social behavior. And it tells the story of Hagar's conflict with Sarai in a way that, at least in the light of earlier extra-biblical texts, seems to take on a more general or typical significance attributable to legal provisions.

Recognition of surrogate motherhood as a normal social expedient is, in fact, explicit in ancient Near Eastern law codes whose influence on the Bible has long been understood. The fact that each of the surrogate mothers who appear in the narratives just cited — Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah — is a slave of the woman for whom she bears offspring is in agreement with the custom of providing a wife with a personal female attendant who would not, in the ordinary course of things, serve as her husband's concubine, but who could, at her mistress's discretion, be used for her advantage in the way that those women were used by Sarai, Rachel, and Leah. Such usages are envisaged by legal documents from Nuzi, dating from the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., as well as by the famous code of Hammurabi, from the first quarter of that millennium.

Apparently, therefore, surrogate motherhood was not then as it is now a matter of private contract, but a legally sustained prerogative attaching to definite domestic institutions. The behavior of a surrogate mother was controlled not by the terms of a private contract, but by the public understanding of her role in a recognized order of domestic authority. In the case of Baby M., conventional views and legal assumptions about maternal rights have come into conflict with equally conven-



SURROGACY?

The New Jersey bishops are quite right to insist that commercial surrogacy "exploits a child as a commodity and exploits a woman as a babymaker."

Naturally, the new infertility-industrial complex as well as some lawyers . . . want to see commercial surrogacy moved from legal limbo into respectability, if necessary by submitting it to state regulation. We couldn't agree less. . . . We prefer the blunt assessment of William Pierce, president of the National Committee for Adoption: "If you regulate it, that is making a public statement that it's all right. We decided a hundred years ago we didn't want people bought and sold in this country." Commercial surrogacy should simply be outlawed under the same sort of laws that, in connection with adoption, now prohibit baby-selling in all fifty states.

Commonweal Editorial, January 30, 1987

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tional views and legal assumptions about contractual obligations. Precisely that kind of dilemma would not seem to have been possible in Mesopotamian societies of three and a half millennia ago, nor, probably, in later Palestinian societies that had drawn on a Mesopotamian heritage of legal wisdom and social custom. In that connection, the case of Hagar, the tone of its biblical narration, and the typical reaction to it of most modern readers, are especially interesting.

Hagar saw her pregnancy as an opportunity no longer to serve her mistress but to rival her. The fact that it was Sarai who authorized her impregnation by Jacob strongly suggests that she was a private serving woman of the sort previously referred to, not eligible for concubinage at the whim of her mistress's husband. Nevertheless, in virtue of the use to which Sarai had put her, she could hope to achieve the status of a concubine, and of one especially favored by reason of her fecundity. That such a development should disconcert Sarai is hardly surprising. But it would seem also that Sarai's reprisal very likely had the backing of customary law, for the code of Hammurabi expressly states that, in analogous circumstances, a slave who used childbearing to claim social parity with her mistress was to be degraded, though not sold, and maintained in a servile status. Most probably, then, in appealing to Abram against Hagar's opportunistic pretensions, Sarai was not simply appealing to an individual whom she could influence on personal grounds, but to the family's sovereign authority on grounds of socially approved conduct if not of explicit law.

That point is worth noting in view of the feeling, spontaneous in most modern readers, that Hagar's unexpected behavior was a refreshing example of maternal self-assertion, that Sarai's reaction was spitefully vindictive, and that Abram's was a cowardly and callous decision merely to follow a path of least resistance in order to evade the cross-fire of two warring women.

Undoubtedly, in the story as it is told, neither Abram nor Sarai emerges for most of us as a noble or amiable character. Modern perspectives on both womanhood and servility elicit our sympathies for Hagar, both in her initial pursuit of upward mobility and her subsequent rejection, degradation, and imperilment. But, without in the least denying the appropriateness of such reactions, it does seem fair and important to recall that, however mixed their motives may have been, Sarai and Abram appear to have been acting in accordance with the laws and customs of a society that had at least perceived surrogate motherhood, as they knew it, to be a practice needing the moderation of public standards and the guidance of approved procedures. It was a society deeply convinced that public welfare depended critically on the orderliness of family life, and therefore on certain clear priorities and agreed-upon practical norms. Poor little Baby M. must at least raise the question: Does our own society's disposal of surrogate motherhood as one more commercial transaction, set adrift in the turbulent shallows of a free market economy, really represent a much higher order of social and moral wisdom than was attained so many centuries ago by those Amorites, Hurrians, and Hebrews?

SCREEN

YOUNG & TENDER

'ARIZONA' & 'FACING SOUTHEAST'

Raising Arizona fulfills a friend's prediction that, sooner or later, Hollywood would catch up to the baby boomers' baby boom — the large numbers of couples now in their thirties who delayed having children because of the financial pressures and careerism of the last decade. The film is only the first of five movies coming out this year about having or wanting a baby (two will be released by Disney studios, which keeps in chronological step with the interests of its original Davy Crockett audiences). As anyone in a mall or urban shopping area can vouch, we live in an age of Stroller Gridlock, where a human wave of Joshuas, Jasons, Jessicas, and Jennifers have inherited the earth, or at least all available open space in an aisle or street.

Raising Arizona exploits the baby boom for comic, farcical purposes, even managing a reference to the current taste for names like Jason. The central couple, played by Holly Hunter and Nicholas Cage, have difficulty having children: she is infertile, and he, an ex-con, is not allowed to adopt. The situation could be (and, I hope, will be) treated seriously in future films, but *Raising Arizona* opts for offbeat, almost cartoon-like slapstick. Amazingly, writers Joel and Ethan Coen, who also divide direction and production credits, by and large pull it off.

The Coens' strength lies in their keen, witty observation of Southwest slobbism and petty criminality. The tone of the film is set in a long opening sequence in which Cage narrates how he met Hunter, a police photographer, at his bookings. Their courtship is a matter of snatch phrases exchanged between Cage's left- and right-profile poses. Hunter is impervious to his sweet talk until she tearfully announces that she is being jilted for a cosmetologist by "my fieants" (alias, fiancé). The film succeeds because of this deft, early link between crime and a comically expressed need for family.

That link unifies much of the madcap mayhem of *Raising Arizona*. Determined on motherhood, Hunter nags Cage into kidnapping one of five quints born to a smarmy Crazy-Eddie type furniture salesman named Nathan "Arizona" (his original name was Hoffheinz). Cage, more understated than in *Peggy Sue Got Married*, at first balks at the theft; pointing at the nursery, Hunter snarls, "Git back in thar and git me a babee." Her comic intensity about "the family unit" reaches a peak when, in a wild car chase, she tells the strapped-in child, "Hold on Nathan, we gonna pick up daddee," who is meanwhile fleeing the police (plus a doberman and a mad convenience store salesman) after stealing some "Huggies." Mean-

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while, back at the ranch, Nathan Sr. (Tray Wilson) holds news conferences on the kidnapping during which he can't resist reminding the cameras of his "unbeatable prices."

The Coens, recent graduates of New York University film school, make films with hard-to-classify humor. *Blood Simple,* a cult hit last year, was a comic film noir, closer to Hitchcock in spirit than any of the weak thrillers (*Black Widow, Dead of Winter, Bedroom Window*) this spring. Yet the weakness of the Coens' films involves a precedence of style over substance, evident, for example, in academic allusions that are seldom vital to the plot. About half of *Raising Arizona* is ruined by the posturing of ex-boxer Randall Tex Cobb as a macho biker bounty hunter out of some sadistically apocalyptic *Mad Max* movie. Even tongue-in-cheek monsters in semi-absurdist life-size cartoons need better dramatic justification.

Perhaps movies in general should handle issues of having and wanting children with something more than comedy. While babies are a sure source of good feelings on film — Nathan Jr. gets his share of cooing "oohs" and "aahs" in any theater — the desire for children, as the recent Vatican pronouncement reminds us, can also occasion deep pain. We read daily of real kidnappings by separated parents (or simply lonely adults), of surrogate motherhood, and of problems of infertility. Some years ago *Kramer vs Kramer* addressed custody issues with dignity. Perhaps some of the new films will go further than *Raising Arizona,* which ends with Cage dreamily fantasizing about a happy old age surrounded by children and grandchildren. "Maybe we were in Utah," he concludes, sardonically referring to the Mormons. Such irony is funny, but also reveals how modernist minds handle values which they can't openly acknowledge, without (horrors!) appearing vulnerable. The Coens angle toward the link of religion and family, but fear it.

Man Facing Southeast rests on a fine premise: at an Argentine asylum, doctors are amazed when a young man walks in and claims to be from another planet. "Why should I wait outside," he explains, "when sooner or later you'll just put me in here anyway?" The line is the first of many rational, cool gestures on his part that get him classified as delusional.

The strength of *Man Facing Southeast* is its fusion of sci-fi, religious, and bedlam motifs. The "visitor" Rantes (Hugo Soto) does not convince anyone about his extraterrestrial identity except his fellow inmates. But his external rationality provokes his doctor (Lorenzo Quintero) to try to solve the riddle of his claim. Only in jest does the doctor ever consider the extraterrestrial story. Yet he recognizes Rantes's intelligence, even genius, especially in music. In long, sometimes tedious, dialogues, the doctor concedes the mental illness of much so-called "normal life": social oppression, and his own broken marriage and alcoholism. Director Eliseo Subiela and dignified acting keep this film from descending to the cliché of the "sanity of the insane," found in such counter-culture films as *King of Hearts*. Better still are provocative allusions to Christ and Pilate, which pose a new version of the ancient question: "What is truth?"

But Director Subiela has slipped us a mickey. We are given far more knowledge than the doctor. Early in the film we see Rantes move objects with magical skill; his best "miracle" involves delivering steaks to poor families in restaurants by mental concentration, a sci-fi update of the loaves and fishes. Later, another fellow "visitor," a young woman named Beatriz, emits blue liquid from her mouth — a clue to something inhuman, I suspect. In addition, Subiela repeatedly shows us Beatriz changing her shoes, like some Imelda Marcos from Outer Space, although he never provides a clue about the meaning of this activity.

Subiela shoots the film mainly from the doctor's point of view, but then denies the doctor access to these oddities, which are never brought to bear on the final determination of Rantes's sanity. We are left to think, or at least to suspect, that Rantes tells the truth about his origins. That is, for half of the film, Subiela provides a genuine mystery; then, without coordinating his clues and plot, he solves it for us, or at least *appears* to. Sophomoric theorists may defend such contrivances by citing Marques, Borges, and the tradition of Latin "magic realism"; in truth, it resembles manipulative double-dealing.

Nevertheless, *Man Facing Southeast* has integrity, more than implied in some descriptions of it as "an adult *E.T.*" It is closer to John Sayles's *The Brother from Another Planet* or David Bowie's *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. The best moment

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in Subiela's film is a genuine surprise: it occurs during a concert of Beethoven's Ninth, where the doctor takes Rantes for some recreation. At first, I hated the scene, thinking the music had been overused. But Subiela provides a profound twist. The "E.T." (savior or lunatic, take your pick) gets up before the chorale and starts to dance. Who needs further proof of the value of his vision? Beethoven (however we classify *him*) would have understood. At such moments, *Man Facing Southeast* has a profound, tender magic about it.

TOM O'BRIEN

ART

MANNERISM AT ITS BEST

CORREGGIO & THE CARRACCI

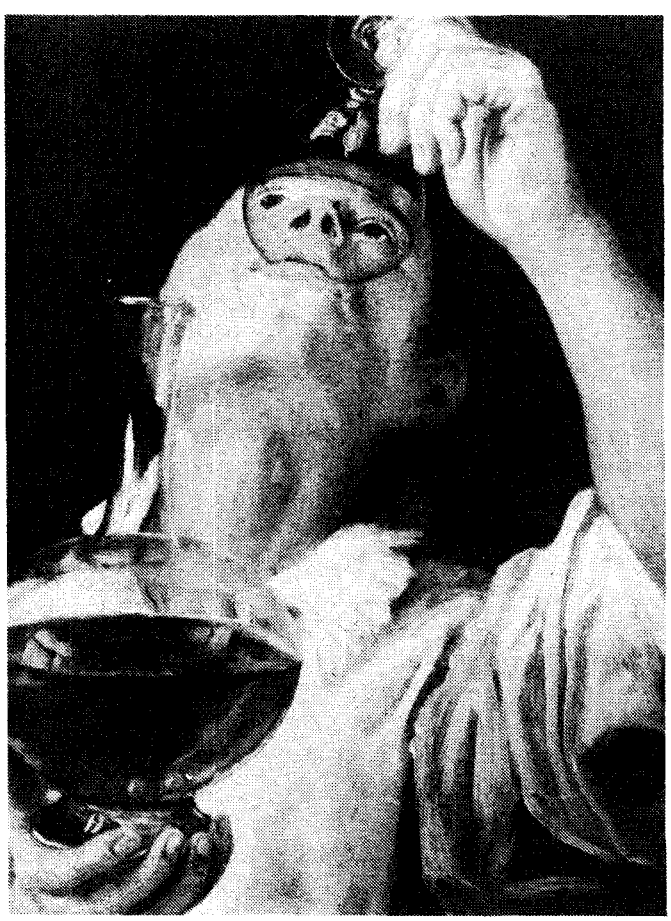
It would be hard to exaggerate the aesthetic success of "The Age of Correggio and the Carracci," which recently moved from the National Gallery in Washington to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, where it will remain until May 24. While its beauties are manifold, it is desperately in need of both critical and popular support. However beautiful, and in some cases legendary, the two hundred paintings this show features — the finest works of Emilian art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries —there is as yet no established and expectant audience among American art-lovers for this remarkable period.

True, Correggio, Parmagianino, and the Bolognese school represent one of the most hallowed traditions in all of the Old Masters, and they are idolized wherever such paintings are cherished. But these painters did not invent anything as earthshaking as perspective or a sculptural conception of the human form, innovations which have always endowed Florence with a special and irrefragable holiness. Rather, these painters from the Emilian region of central Italy perfected, stabilized, and made current everything that was best in the traditions that preceded them. They achieved this so definitively that from the early seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, Annibale Carracci and his followers Guercino, Domenichino, and Reni (collectively called the Bolognese school) dominated the critical discussion of art. Only towards the middle of the last century, when Baudelaire and Ruskin, from different perspectives, dealt the death blow to the Old Masters tradition, did their importance decline. Thereafter, the art of the Carracci and their disciples came to be viewed as staid and formulaic, an opinion whose prevalence has been only partially mitigated by recent reassessments.

This general apathy towards the achievements of the Bolognese school is reflected in the attendance (or rather lack of it) at the Metropolitan show. To begin with, there is no need for a special ticket to the exhibit, indicating that the Met has less than grand expectations for it. In the Met's recent Van Gogh exhibit, the galleries were several people deep in front of even minor works; here one is left in relative solitude before some of the grandest masterpieces ever to proceed from the human imagination.

The Metropolitan exhibition begins with Correggio (d.1534), who invented a variety of motifs which show up throughout Europe for the next two and a half centuries, like seeds that are brought to flower long after the mother-plant has died. His *Martydom of Four Saints*, displayed in the first room, is a perfect conjoining of sweetness and strength. Its great power derives not from the violence depicted, for which the artist seems to have had little taste, but from the ecstatic enthusiasm of the martyrs. A strong and lambent light forces its way into the deep folds of their garments, which are agitated into movement by what seems to be a surge of wind, as an angel descends from heaven with faultless grace to place upon their heads the crowns of martydom.

In the next room Parmagianino, Correggio's greatest follower, has derived only sweetness from his master, disowning entirely the sinews of his strength. Parmagianino fully embodies what is usually called Mannerism, a style which takes its motifs from the High Renaissance, but which enfeebled them by leaving their empty gestures cloaked in strangely brilliant colors. Included with other works are a portrait of his supposed mistress, Antea, as well as a depiction of the conver-



From *Boy Drinking* by Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), Metropolitan Museum, on loan from Peter Sharp, New York.

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sion of Paul. They have been among the hits of the exhibition. The portrait of the beautiful young woman is conservative in its simple and evocative frontality, and the forthrightness of her gaze is fully consonant with the classicism of Raphael. But the *Conversion of Paul* neutralizes into pure prettiness the violence of a man being trampled by a horse. The paint is spread across the canvas like a length of iridescent silk bodying forth garments, manes, an enchanting sword, and a velutinous landscape.

The Mannerism implicit in this latter painting is further exemplified in the cosmic colors of the Ferrarese Dosso Dossi. In addition to being a great landscape painter, the exhibit reveals him as one of the foremost figurative artists of the mid-century. The exhibit also includes four bizarrely religious paintings by Lelio Orsi; probably nowhere else will you see so much of his work in one room, and his special qualities in a flash of lightning, richly evoke the religious and spiritual conflicts of the middle decades of the sixteenth century.

These conflicts came to a head in the Council of Trent which Paul III convened in 1545, and which ended in 1563. The relevance of this council to art lay in its insistence that religious scenes be portrayed more devoutly and less frivolously than Mannerism had done. This reorientation eventually produced the Carracci reform, which reinvigorated painting by hearkening back to Correggio and Raphael. The best part of the exhibition is the section devoted to the three Carracci: Annibale, his brother, Agostino, and their cousin Ludovico. Ludovico, an artist only beginning to be appreciated, had a thoroughly independent taste in matters of color, composition, and figuration. In the context of the history of art, it was Annibale who provided the basis for that classicizing baroque that held the field, in however many incarnations, down to the nineteenth century. In addition to the rare privilege of seeing part of the fresco cycle of the Palazzo Fava, upon which the three Caracci collaborated, and in which they enunciated for the first time their reformist attitudes, this exhibition displays Annibale's splendid San Ludovico altarpiece, and *The Assumption of the Virgin*, which have a religious energy unknown since the time of the young Titian.

The Carracci's greatest legacy consisted in the establishment of the so called Bolognese school, which included Guido Reni, Domenichino, and Guercino, all of whom are lavishly represented here. The Metropolitan's own *Madonna and Child* is one of Guido's finest works, which features a magnificant compositional thrust, combined with an almost magical vitality imparted to the flesh passages. The moody classicism of Domenichino will be a little harder for modern viewers to admire, but the nine paintings included here provide an excellent initiation into his art. Probably the more energetic chiaroscuro of Guercino, inspired partially by Caravaggio, will appeal more readily to modern tastes.

Contemporary with these artists, there are the treasured works of Mastelletta, Albani, and the brilliantly eccentric Bartolomeo Schedoni. After them come the lesser artists, or artists less well represented, like Franceschini, Burrini, and Crespi, in whom the tradition of great Emilian art comes at last to its close. But even they are done sufficient justice in "The Age of Correggio and the Carracci," which is easily the best Old Masters exhibition at the Met in many years.

It is the best exhibition because of the maturity of its theme as well as the completeness and excellence of its choice of paintings. It is fully satisfying on two levels. The scholar will be introduced to minor artists he or she may not have known before, or known only in reproductions, and he or she will cherish the rare opportunity to see gathered into a few rooms the greatest works from many countries. To the general art-lover, these two hundred large paintings will be extremely attractive at first glance since the Emilian artists as a rule strove for a rich beauty rather than for the brutality and harshness of Caravaggio and his followers. Indeed, the appeal of these paintings is so immediate that they may even serve to convert many who now are devoted almost exclusively to the Impressionists and their successors.

JAMES GARDNER

James Gardner writes on the arts for Commentary, New Criterion, *and* The New Leader.

STAGE

COMPANY LOVES MISERY

NUNN & CAIRD'S 'LES MISÉRABLES'

At the end of *Les Misérables*, Cosette and Marius, the juvenile leads, crouch center stage, offering each other love and comfort, while the dead mass behind them sing their no-longer-beating hearts out. Jean Valjean is at the center, flanked by Cosette's mother and Eponine, who so loved Marius; all of those who died on the barricades are stretched across the stage. Only poor Javert is absent. Since he died — a suicide, it's true — of Valjean's conviction that the human heart is more powerful than THE LAW, the directors really should have made room for him in the final moment of choral uplift. The young couple join in — the dead and the living bound in a hymn to human possibility. I am not quite sure what they were singing about, but it was an inspiriting moment after the fashion of *Annie* ("Tomorrow"), *Do Re Mi* ("Make Someone Happy") and *Carousel* ("You'll Never Walk Alone"). My attention was diverted from the final musical message by the realization that whatever the show thought it was about, it was really an account of how the suffering and pain of so many people, not to say all those deaths in the failed revolution, were simply the means by which the two wimpish lovers are brought together.

I exaggerate. There is no pain and suffering and revolutionary sacrifice in *Les Misérables*. It is a consumer-oriented show designed to make the ugly palatable. *Les Misérables* is

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one of those novels that everyone, including me, thinks he has read and which practically no one, including me, actually has read. Even so, I remember Hugo's work as a philosophical melodrama in the great nineteenth-century tradition. The musical version is a theatrical melodrama in which the philosophical concerns are reduced to singable slogans and the chief ingredient, as becomes a stage melodrama, is pathos. I have nothing against the pathetic; my work on James Whitcomb Riley has taught me that it is an effective element in popular poetry. Still, when Valjean sings over the dying Fantine or Marius over the dying Eponine, we are expected to admire the theatrical image. We are allowed to cry if we want to (I saw no tears in the theater), but the musical moment is not about death; it is about performance. There are indicators in the show to remind us that there are such things in the world as indifference, greed, and poverty, but they have a way of being swallowed up by the feistiness of Gavroche, the Peck's Bad Boy of the Revolution, or the comic nastiness of Thénardier. The latter is played by Leo Burmester with the villainous vigor of his diabolical General D from last Fall's short-lived *Raggedy Ann,* a failed sentimental fantasy that is much closer in spirit to the triumphant new French-English import than the creators of *Les Misérables* would probably like to think.

The cosmetic impulse in *Les Misérables* is most obvious in the scene on the barricades. The unpleasantness in the musical comes for the most part from ordinary people and is aimed at ordinary people — less miserable ones picking on more miserable ones — but there is presumably an oppressive force out there grinding the people underfoot, whose only representative on stage is Javert. The idealistic students sing their alliance with the people and then take to the barricades where they and their followers among the citizens are slaughtered — except of course, for Marius who is saved for the final curtain. Slaughter in this instance is a highly choreographed series of falls, rolls, and somersaults as, one after another, the participants tumble into place; the process ends in a tableau of destruction that milks off any possibility of anger or horror. In some ways it suggests eighteenth-century battle pieces like *Battle of Bunk-*

POEMS
Joyce James

Raising Animals: Esther and Eve

From the barn door, nodding,
docile and attentive
the lambs watched me.
I carried black nippled formula to them.
Their sober faces partitioned my days.
Darker earlier, fall with the wet ankle-deep grass
feeling like sadness, my parents said
that the lambs have to be sold.
They said *before cold weather.*
They said *before hard snows.*
A sting of winter in my eyes,
I fell into bed.
The heads of sheep, silent and apocryphal, stared at me
until morning came like the realization of sin.

The spring my father steered
the bobbing flock of Suffolk ewes toward me,
he looked mythic coming closer and closer.
Through ground-clouds
he towed two lambs
with impenetrable, creamy neck-wool
but underbellies smooth
like the inside of a woman's leg.
I touched their noses and looked into their ears.
I held them in my arms all summer,
learning to negotiate
this disappearing world, telling myself
if it gives nothing
then it can demand nothing.

It was my father who kept his Angus cows
until they were too old to calve,
my brother feeding every abandoned stray that stayed on
and on.
Why hadn't I knowledge to single out
something preservable? Some people love willow trees.
Why did I ignore my sisters, sitting on the well,
nursing, with their fingertips the newest kittens?
I believed careful selection of Old Testament names,
ones that parents give children
to capture an intrinsic goodness
was something even lambs could grow into.
I was married when I remembered
my mother never naming her banties, her show pieces,
bronze-feathered hackles glinting in the light.

Her anonymous hens peered from cartons
above wooden nests, each protecting six small eggs dark
as agates.
They wore feet like vultures.
Those hens lack grace, I'd say,
admiring my lambs that trotted after the bottle in step.
What difference were the deep snows?
I've made choices that weren't choices
and played games that weren't games.
In the truth of daylight, I know this.

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er's Hill, but, despite the conventional positions of the figures in John Trumbull's painting, death seems to have crossed that field. In *Les Misérables,* the image has the look of a ceramic table ornament, a collectible so elegant that the audience, undisturbed, can concentrate on the marvelous machines for which the musical is celebrated.

Although Colm Wilkinson, who is in fine voice as Jean Valjean, gets his share of applause, the strongest outburst of audience enthusiasm was saved for the moment when the two halves of the barricade met center stage, kissed and joined to form a single set, up which the rebels could clamber and on which they could die. Much has been written recently about the technology available to stage designers, the triumph of the computer, but these monumental theatrical devices — like the special effects in the sci-fi and fantasy films so popular today — are not in the service of idea or emotion or dramatic event. They are the show. The response to the mechanical marvels, to spectacle for its own sake, is a kind of worship of things that is one with the sanitizing of potential audience distress.

All successful plays these days spin-off souvenirs as though Broadway were Saturday-morning children's TV, which it is in a way. Yet, the souvenir stand at *Les Misérables* is particularly revealing. There one can buy T-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, all manner of merchandise decorated with the sweet child's face that looks out, large-eyed, from the advertisements for the show. My companion turned away, saying, "I can't bear to see all those women in mink coats elbowing one another for position to buy a T-shirt with the picture of a starving child on it." Yet, the women in the mink are part of the show. *Les Misérables,* on and off stage, is a consumer pageant in which the players gobble up not only souvenirs but the sugar-coated vision of human misery that makes all this possible. The production got an ovation, but I am not sure who was applauding whom. I did admire the efficiency of the machines and the talent of many of the performers, but I left the theater not only unmoved but afraid that I would find sidewalk hawkers among the stretch limos selling African-famine dolls.

GERALD WEALES

For a week I prayed, *please god, my lambs.*
They still stand, in the night,
two warm reasonable faces at arm's length
when someone I love blames me
for what I can't change — I wasn't there.

Playing Pizzicato

Though my father carried a leather wallet
with folded blank checks,
my mother would snap shut, with a kissing sound, her
coin purse,
its gullet-pouch wadded full of dollar bills.
I can see her non-committal nodding
as Mrs. Fullerton dangled each priced item
before our eyes like perfect-attendance badges.
She drove in, in a sputtering old model car
with a running board, stopped then shifted to neutral.
She carried a stiff cowhide bag stuffed with samples of
Watkins Products.
Piece after piece, she showed my mother
every bottle, cake and tube in the black satchel,
its alligator-sized mouth ajar —
the pineapple-orange flavoring,
oxblood shoe polish, allspice.
She plucked boxes from their elastic loops
like a conservatory-trained violinist
playing pizzicato.
Then from even deeper, she'd pull
spearmint-flavored toothpaste, coconut
pudding mix, gelatin powder,
tweezers, a paperback book of four O'Henry
stories and baking powder.
The times, my mother bought nothing,
I was embarrassed.
Everything went back slowly into place
while we stared at the woman's feet, one leg
four inches shorter than the other and laced
into a platform-soled shoe.
I longed for the burn salve as she slid it away;
the top of its round can had a picture
of a St. Bernard pulling his young mistress
onto the rocks, saving her from drowning.
I almost danced to smell the apple-blossom
talc she pronounced again with a big flourish,
her dentures loose on the last word.
After she left I heard my mother telling
my father that *she always arrives right at dinner*
when the table's already been set.
This morning I called home.
I wanted my mother to say the names —
vanilla extract, gardenia cologne,
balsam-pine handcleaner for men.
I wanted her to say our names too,
each one clearly, wave us back, one after another,
her children with pitiful and hateful eyes,
the children she tried to push away that day,
go play, go swing, go upstairs.
I didn't want her to say that my father had a lot of trouble
putting in his fifty acres of soybeans,
that they needed rain worse than ever.

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The midwife arrived too late

THE SEVEN AGES

Eva Figes
Pantheon, $13.95, 186 pp.

Robert E. Hosmer, Jr.

No doubt a good many American readers have never heard of Eva Figes, and that's a shame, for her fiction often reveals an insightful and creative mind at work. Born in Berlin, she fled to England in 1939; there she excelled in studies and won a scholarship to read literature at Queen Mary College, London, from which she received a B.A. (with honors) in 1953. From 1952 until 1967 she worked as an editor for several publishers, married, and had two children. The breakup of her marriage led to her writing her first novel, *Equinox* (1966), after which she left publishing to devote her full energies to writing and translating. Eight novels, three scholarly studies, and an autobiography have followed.

Figes's fiction is experimental, intricate, and challenging. A committed feminist whose *Patriarchal Attitudes: Women in Society* is a classic study of woman's subjugation by man, Figes's opposition to traditional sexual role definition runs parallel to her pronounced dissatisfaction with traditional forms of fiction. As a result, her own fiction often lacks standard plot structure; moreover, an unreliable narrator coupled with a dense, allusive prose style sometimes complicates matters.

Figes's first six novels are essentially fables of identity, whether personal, racial, sexual, or artistic. Oppressed, often aged, and usually female, the protagonists of these novels endure, rather than live in, haunted worlds of social isolation. Though Figes can succeed in crafting a moving novel that charts the pain-wracked course of a failing elderly man (*Winter Journey*, 1966), she can fail, as in the cases of *Konek Landing* (1969) and *Days* (1974), by burdening her narrative with heavy-handed allegorizing and ideological stridency.

Yet with *Waking* (1981) and *Light* (1983) Figes achieved an artistic maturity of distinction, refining her craft and modulating her voice without abandoning the intensity of her beliefs. These are novels of poetic lyricism, both clearly descended from Virginia Woolf's great experimental novels. Both are concerned with the promise and pain of time passage. *Waking* chronicles that hazy period between sleep and full awakening at seven times in the life of an unnamed, solipsistic female narrator. In *Light*, a novella limning one day in the life of the French Impressionist painter Claude Monet, Figes's prose, at once impressionistic and sensuous, has an evocative power sufficient to make light the chief character in her work, as it was in Monet's.

Though readers of Figes's fiction have eagerly awaited her new novel, it wasn't worth the wait, for this latest fiction is indeed a disappointment. Hyped as "a new sort of historical novel, a remarkable blend of history, folklore, and the poetic imagination; a narrative progression of intense beauty," it is, in truth, none of these. Rather, it is a most unsatisfying effort with technical flaws that may cause the reader serious problems.

"Seven voices for seven ages" might be one way of describing both the content and technique of this novel. The first voice we hear is that of the contemporary Emma, a midwife who has retired to a cottage in the English countryside. Emma is not the protagonist in this novel, but the medium through and to whom the other voices speak. Each voice calls from a particular historical period — early medieval, Chaucerian, Renaissance, Puritan, eighteenth-century, Victorian/Edwardian. Each speaks of the experience of childbirth, for that process illuminates the humiliation and often unnecessary pain endured by women who have been turned into reproductive mechanisms, often against their will, by men.

The story of Judith, told in Chapter Two, is instructive and revealing. As a child during World War II, Emma was sent to stay with cousins at some distance from London. There she listens to the aged Granny Martin. In a story-within-a-story, Granny tells the tale of Margery the midwife, a folk healer who told the story of the unfortunate Judith, raped while out in the fields gathering medicinal herbs. Raped five more times and bearing a child in every case, Judith supplies graphic illustration for Figes's great theme; at the same time her story provides the author with ample opportunity to detail the traditions and methods of midwifery and catalogue the contents of the midwife's medicinal basket.

And so it goes in the course of the novel. One woman will call to Emma from a pile of burning leaves; another will speak from the pages of an old diary found in the attic; a third will be moved to recite when a box of sepia photographs is brought to her. In very age the themes remain the same: women have been tortured and victimized, their reproductive rights and independent integrity unrecognized and violated; men have been the victimizers, both sexually and medically; folk medicine, the female art of natural healing, is superior to professional medicine, the male science of unnatural bleeding and cutting.

Without denying the altogether too frequent validity of the first two charges, a perceptive reader may easily and logically respond, "not this again." Such repetition might be justified in exchange for some significant pleasures of the text, but they are not to be found here.

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Consideration of *The Seven Ages* in aesthetic terms uncovers a number of flaws. First, Figes has not given us a smooth, subtlely crafted narrative; the chronology is both confused and confusing. Chapters are rambling and discursive, begging for the blue pencil. The symbolism, say of the chessboard in Chapter Four, meant to create thematic resonance and provide narrative linkage, is trite and ineffective. Moreover, repetition, excess, and coincidence detract from the narrative. Description of the birth process, again and again, reveals the first two faults; and how many lists of hollyhock, mugwort, fenugreek seeds, and quince kernels can we stomach? Coincidence, used sparingly, can be an effective dramatic device, but here its repeated use only gives the impression that the novelist has no other narrative strategies.

Though it be carping, one also feels the lack of wit and irony in *The Seven Ages*, neither ruled out simply by the serious nature of the subject matter. Ultimately, the question is one of form. Is this a novel? A series of short stories? A history of female folk-healing? A diatribe against male physicians? A catalogue of herbal lore? It could be any one of these depending on where your eye lands and what your ideological preference might be.

While Figes's purpose in creating a feminist counterpoint to Shakespeare's seven ages of man is admirable, she's already done that, and in far better style, in *Waking*. *The Seven Ages* is moving in its sense of the author's palpable concern for her sisters of other times and places, her discernment of a community of suffering, both diachronic and synchronic, that is in need of healing. Unfortunately, Figes has established the very criteria by which she fails here. In Chapter Two, Margery the midwife recognizes that potions and herbs are not enough to soothe the pain of a woman in labor:

> Margery understood this, that however much faith she might have in her arsenal of potions and amulets, it could never be enough, particularly for a first birth. And so she became a storyteller. Her narrative powers helped to divert not only the unfortunate victim, but the attendant women, who were less likely to question her methods on occasion if suitably entertained.

Figes's narrative powers do not help to divert the reader who may feel like the unfortunate victim. Indeed, the reader of *The Seven Ages* may justly question Figes's methods and feel sufficiently cheated of entertainment to echo Cleopatra's cry, "Give me to drink mandragora!"

GIVING BIRTH TO DILEMMAS

HARD CHOICES
MIXED BLESSINGS OF MODERN MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY
B.D. Colen
G.P. Putnam's, $18.95, 264 pp.

LIFE CHOICES
Howard Levine
Simon and Schuster, $17.95, 263 pp.

T. Patrick Hill

Recent advances in medical science and technology have reached such a level that we are tempted to speak of them as miracles, and not without some justification. By virtue of technology, medical care can now begin *in utero* and continue through the most extreme stages of terminal illness. Medical technology applied, for example, to organ transplantation has required the medical profession to redefine death; medical technology in the form of ventilators has forced the legal system to embark upon uncharted legal waters of the so-called right-to-die issue; and medical technology at work in genetic engineering is now positioning the human race so that it may participate actively in its own evolution. Philosophers have been called upon to engage these matters with a new discourse called bioethics.

The developments have been so dramatic that they appear to outrun public policy, civil legislation, and ethical expectations. The result is that, as a society, we are frequently at a loss to know what to do. Our dilemma, in its more basic form, poses the question whether we ought to do medically everything that we can do medically. We can (but ought we?) aggressively treat the terminally ill or the imperiled new-born.

While these are obviously medical dilemmas, they are also inescapable social dilemmas that tend to pit the freedom of individuals against the common good of society. For example, should a terminally ill patient be permitted to reject a life-prolonging ventilator even at the risk of offending society's sense of the sanctity of life and nudging it closer to the slippery slope called death on demand?

The fundamental difficulty such dilemmas pose, for the present at least, is that society cannot continue or decline the use of modern health care without dealing with the acute questions raised when technologically applied health care intersects with human values — dignity and autonomy in particular. And if these dilemmas cannot be avoided, neither can the need to resolve them in ways that, within reason in a morally pluralistic society, respect the rights and values of all citizens, and that promise a basic social harmony after legislation and public policy have been adopted. No easy task.

The essential merit in B.D. Colen's *Hard Choices* and Howard Levine's *Life Choices* is the former's presentation of the size of the task confronting us as individuals in a pluralistic society.

Colen, science editor for *Newsday*, is a Pulitzer winner for his work on the Baby Jane Doe case. As a journalist, however, his coverage of biomedical ethics goes back to the landmark case of Karen Ann Quinlan in 1976. At a recent conference

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Saviors, myths, & sacred heroes

Mary Gerhart

Myth persists in spite of Rudolf Bultmann's program of demythologization in the 1940s. One of the most interesting sources of confusion in contemporary religious thought is in the use of the term "myth." In her book, *The Second Sex* (1949), which influenced feminist theology early in the 1950s, Simone de Beauvoir laments that women "have erected no virile myth in which their projects are reflected," and that they "still dream through the dreams of men." De Beauvoir treats "myth" as a functional part of self-consciousness.

In Rosemary Ruether's *Sexism and God-Talk* (1982), however, "myth" means a misleading story which masks a different, true situation — in the sense, for example, that the myth of the origin of evil masks a destructive dualism of "good" versus "evil." Ruether substitutes the term "midrash" (originally, a haggadic or halakic exposition of a text) and re-tells the story of creation from a feminist perspective to overcome the misunderstandings generated from the Genesis myth.

Myths: Gods, Heroes, and Saviors, *by Leonard J. Biallas, Twenty-third Publications, $9.95 paper, 299 pp.*

Other authors, specifically those reviewed here, present us with variations on the foregoing themes of myth. Leonard Biallas, for example, defines myths as "stories from cultures and religious traditions that help us become aware of our true selves." In his *Myths: Gods, Heroes, and Saviors,* Biallas finds these figures "at the very core of ourselves." When we discover and affirm them within us, "we give substance to our own potential divinity." Biallas is alert to these possibilities in the world religions. He suggests, by his choices of stories from many religious traditions, that by reflecting on the stories of religions not our own, we can "better understand and to appropriate our own." In his study, myths are arranged thematically — creation, separation, tricksters, the vision quest, the heroic task, and the gentle hero. Each chapter draws from several religious traditions and is followed by a set of discussion questions, questions which make the book suitable for classroom use as well as for personal reading.

One is tempted to say of William G. Doty's *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals* that if there is something about myth that it lacks, whatever that "something" is, is not to be known. Doty ranges widely in describing and reviewing contemporary ways of understanding myth and ritual. Notwithstanding its comprehensiveness, his study makes no pretense to value-free analysis: His assessments are straightforward and appreciative. In Doty's view, if myth is to *be myth,* its many dimensions both call for and suggest multiple forms of analysis. Moving beyond well known theorists, such as Turner, Jung, Freud, Frye, and Lévi-Strauss, Doty gives access to lesser known figures. The book is issue-oriented and helps leaders to locate consensus where it exists and reasons for the continuing controversy where consensus is missing. In his three-page section on "Gender Differentiation," for example, Doty provides both a justification and a critique, building his case from Erik Erikson, Margaret Mead, June Singer, and Ursula LeGuin. The chapter on "Functional Contexts and Truth" concludes with an analysis of the "smart" and the "proper," (terms drawn from Jonathan Smith, Morris Freilich, and Eric ten Raa) to differentiate between different levels of mythic expression.

Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals, *by William G. Doty, University of Alabama Press, $28.50, 326 pp.*

Although the term "myth" is never mentioned in Edna Hong's *The Way of the Sacred Tree,* her novel of the Dakota people, based on historical records of family and missionary papers, is laced with the credibility and the incredibility of myth. The novel opens with the birth of a male child "on that never-to-be-forgotten Night in the Moon when the Deer Run when the sky rained stars and the Moon of Night became as bright as the Noon of Day" with all the tribe standing watch

The Way of the Sacred Tree, *by Edna Hong, Augsburg, $10.95, paper, 204 pp.*

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under the shooting stars. The novel ends with the hanging of thirty-eight braves in Mankato, Minnesota, in 1862, and the exile of the remainder of the four Dakota tribes to a reservation. In between, the author describes changes in the self-understandings of the Dakotas as they encounter white men and Christianity. Though the price paid by the Dakotas was incomparably greater than that of the whites, the betrayal of the myths of both Dakotas and Christians is stated as the cause for the disasters suffered variously for all: "Pure hatred. . . . Hatred that gave birth to hatred. The endless chain of hatred and vengeance. A scalp for a scalp. A life for a life."

In the late nineteenth century, "myth" took on a derogatory meaning when it was differentiated from "history." The ambiguity which resulted from separating myth from history can be seen in Yaffa Eliach's *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*. In-

***Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust: The First Original Hasidic Tales in a Century**, by Yaffa Eliach, Oxford University Press, $15.95, 266 pp.*

deed, the transcriber of the tales thinks that the genre, "Hasidic tales," may be the "most appropriate literary form through which to come to terms with the Holocaust and its aftermath." The Hasids date from the early 1700s, and Hasidic tales have always been characterized by folk elements blended with agile wit. They are usually linked to the historical existence of a zaddik (saint or religious leader) and are told to preserve the human spirit in extremis. In her introduction to this collection of post-Holocaust Hasidic tales, Eliach tells of the lengths she went to in confirming the historical-empirical details of the stories, for example, to find the huge "pit" (which turned out to be a bomb crater) across which carousing prison guards forced prisoners to leap for their lives one moonless night. In this book, the mythic and the historic are both taken seriously.

One enters a different world, although the same religious tradition, in Jakob Petuchowski's *Our Masters Taught: Rabbinic Stories and Sayings*. "Myth" is not mentioned; instead midrash and haggadah are the terms of identification. These terms are set off against legal components (halakhah) and laws. The narrators and, with few exceptions, the characters are male. The most interesting stories engage in some kind of riddle or unexpected response to a question. Neither the mythic nor the legal aspect is explicit, yet the narratives raise

***Our Masters Taught: Rabbinic Stories and Sayings**, by Jakob J. Petuchowski, Crossroad, $10.95, 117 pp.*

ethical questions and promise to share in the wisdom of those who originally told the stories.

Finally, in the introduction to *The Holy Book in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Frederick M. Denny and Rodney L. Taylor, myth is seen as part of the oral tradition, as distinct from scripture, or written text. The brief introduction, which describes three forms of religious expression (the conceptual, the practical, and the social) and three aspects of scripture (origins, forms, and functions), is followed by nine chapters, each written by a specialist, who describes the scriptures of one of the nine religious traditions: Judaism, Christianity, Latter-day Saints, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

The last chapter, "Nonliterate Traditions and Holy Books: Toward a New Model," by Sam D. Gill, how-

***The Holy Book in Comparative Perspective**, ed. by Frederick M. Denny and Rodney L. Taylor, University of South Carolina Press, $19.95, 252 pp.*

ever, calls into question simple distinctions between oral and written traditions, including the conventional one between myth (written) and ritual (non-written). He points out that many of our conventional distinctions (such as "verbal" and "non-verbal," "literate" and "non-literate") are fixed by writing and tempt us to ignore the ways that the categories may overlap. Gill refers to a diagram (which unfortunately does not appear in the book) in which the "informative" aspects of religion are mapped on the "performative" aspects and vice versa, and proposes a new model of religious studies based on this distinction. Gill's sensitivity to relatively "non-scriptural" religious traditions improves our understanding of "myth" as well.

The reader at this point might well wish to return to Doty's first chapter in *Mythography*, which entertains seventeen elements in a "working definition" of myth. Here the confusion noticed in isolated references to myth can be transformed into an appreciation of both its negative and positive uses.

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(Continued from page 226)

at Princeton University, Colen criticized journalists for not being properly prepared to deal with the substance of biomedical ethical issues, resorting instead to sensational and superficial reporting. Implicit in the criticism is Colen's belief that journalists can legitimately report on these issues, a belief that is justified by his present analysis of genetic screening, in vitro fertilization, neonatology, organ transplantation and the treatment of the terminally ill. The range is quite comprehensive and the treatment, whether legal, medical, economic, or ethical, is documentary rather than interpretive.

Like a good reporter, Colen starts with cases of real people who agreed to be interviewed by him. Therein lie the strength and the weakness of the book. There is no denying the powerful immediacy of this approach. We learn, for example, of the agony of Ellen and Jeff Fleischer and Justin, their Tay-Sachs child; or of the profound misgivings of Lisa O'Reilly whose fourteen-week premature baby, Joey, survived six neurosurgical procedures, at a cost of more than $200,000, with severe brain damage and no hope of anything resembling a normal life. With these cases before us, we can readily share Colen's conclusion that modern medical technology is indeed a mixed blessing. But beyond an understanding that something is seriously disturbing about modern medicine's seeming inability to accept death as human, there is little more that the journalist as such can declare. The evidence apparent throughout *Hard Choices* is that the Promethean challenge of technologically applied medical care will have to be met on higher ground.

Which is why the opening words of Howard Levine's *Life Choices* are so significant. "Philosophy is relevant again," the author tells us, because "the success of biology and medicine has revitalized the long-dormant discipline of ethics." But Levine, who is a philosopher and formerly served as Director of the National Science Foundation's Public Understanding of Science Programs, is willing to go farther, asserting that while the methods of scientific medicine may be ethically neutral, their outcomes are replete with ethical consequences for public policy, law, and the allocation of financial resources to health care. The result is that scientific medicine raises questions which philosophy alone can answer.

A typical case is a doctor withholding information from a patient who has tested positively for AIDS. The doctor, on the grounds that the test was inconclusive because his patient was not in the high risk group for AIDS, said nothing. Can this be justified? Levine thinks not and advances the cogent distinction between telling the truth and being truthful. Inability to do the former does not release one from meeting the obligation of the latter. This is solid philosophical thinking as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. It is the kind of logical discourse that characterizes the author's analysis of genetic intervention and medical experimentation with human beings, for example, but hardly the kind that exhausts the possibilities of philosophical analysis of biomedical matters.

The problem becomes disturbingly clear when, in declaring the abortion dilemma, like all serious ethical dilemmas, a conflict between two claims to fundamental rights, Levine indicates that the final ethical choice belongs to the people. He seems to have forgotten that unlike public policy, there are no ethics without absolutes. And it cannot be forgotten that a pluralistic society facing the pervasive ethical dilemmas of modern medical care may seek a social consensus so intently as to become what Chesterton described as "too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table." One detects legitimate skepticism in B.D. Colen because he seems to sense the objective limitations of the journalist's analysis; in Levine, a fatal skepticism seems to surrender the relevance of ethics to its nemesis, social relativism.

"A delight to read."
—Best Sellers

HALFWAY TO HEAVEN

The Hidden Life of the Sublime Carthusians

By ROBIN BRUCE LOCKHART

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REVIEWERS

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 226)

to provide guidance, but each of us is responsible to make decisions of conscience and act on them. Mr. Gallagher is clearly right in his perception of the evil consequences for anyone who remains in sin, especially the horrendous evil of intending to incinerate or even vaporize untold millions of persons. One moral theologian has already written very persuasively of nuclear deterrence as "the taproot" of evil in our violent and death-dealing society.

It seems to me that Mr. Gallagher, and all of us who accept the teaching of the pastoral, and who also see so clearly that the conditions are not being met must take the next step. We must refuse to support those policies any longer and

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perhaps even actively resist them.

An opportunity to do this will be provided at the Nevada Test Site on May 3, 1987, the fourth anniversary of the pastoral letter. Pax Christi-USA will be sponsoring a national prayer-action from May 3-5. We hope many of our members will come, but we also invite others to join us.

BISHOP THOMAS J. GUMBLETON
Auxilary Bishop/Detroit

The moral menace

Providence, R.I.

To the Editors: It is a very good thing that you continue to press the moral issue of nuclear deterrence and to publish articles like those of Edward Doherty and Michael Gallagher. It is difficult to imagine any other issue of greater importance to the moral education of us all.

It may be worth remarking that the basic argument against present American (and European and Russian) nuclear policy is not new, nor is the menace of moral contagion Gallagher so poignantly portrays.

Regarding present American nuclear policy, Germaine Grisez and Russell Shaw put it this way in the 1974 edition of their book, *Beyond the New Morality: The Responsibilities of Freedom:*

> It was the United States, after all, which dropped the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki justifying this action by the argument that it would "save lives" (American lives, of course, not Japanese lives, which presumably were judged to be of less value) . . . the fact of the matter is that for the past quarter century the United States has put the world on notice that if circumstances so require, it is prepared to do to other cities and their civilian populations even worse than it did to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That, after all, is what the U.S. nuclear deterrence strategy is all about: A strategy which affirms that, if pressed to the wall in war, the United States would rain down nuclear bombs on enemy cities.

Regarding the menace of moral contagion stemming from our policy, at least one major allied leader thought it was already a *fait accompli* forty years ago. I cite the following from Lord Moran's *Churchill:*

> Churchill said: "We ought not to wait until Russia is ready. I believe it will be eight years before she has these bombs." His face brightened. "America knows that 52 percent of Russia's motor industry is in Moscow and could be wiped out by a single bomb. It might mean wiping out three million people, but they would think nothing of that." He smiled. "They think more of erasing an historical building like the Kremlin."

Thanks to Gallagher and Doherty and others like them, we can begin to recognize that it is something more than disheartening that most American Catholic bishops continue to sidestep this issue.

THOMAS EWENS

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

Carlin & AIDS tests

Irvington, N.Y.

To the Editors: Regarding Carlin's column, "Not by Condoms Alone" [March 13]: I heartily agree. Testing for AIDS should be mandatory, but it cannot until the Reagan administration and Ed Meese protect the rights of those infected. Gay rights groups oppose mandatory testing not because, as you contend, "such measures will disproportionately affect gays, thus undermining the social legitimacy of homosexuality," but because gays legitimately fear losing their jobs and being ostracized by society. Gays have experienced, and greatly fear, alienation from their families and communities. Until responsible legislation based upon medical fact is enacted to protect the civil rights of perhaps two million Americans carrying AIDS, gay rights groups will continue to oppose mandatory testing.

JOHN F. PALMERTON

What God doesn't give

Stillwater, Minn.

To the Editors: David Carlin's comments on AIDS seem to suggest that only cowardly fear of gay rights activism, civil libertarians, and sex educators touting "safe sex" with condoms stand in the way of expanded and "semi-compulsive" use of the AIDS blood test. As a physician, I would counter that "not by the AIDS test and condoms combined" will humankind successfully address the challenge of AIDS.

I do agree that voluntary AIDS testing should be readily available in physicians' offices, public health clinics, and for marriage license applicants upon request. It should be routinely offered to patients in sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinics, intravenous drug abuse treatment programs, and to others whose history of sexual behavior is "high risk." But I see no need at present to test *all* hospital in-patients.

My major concern with Mr. Carlin's

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message, however, is with its not so subtle "us" against "them" blaming of gays for the public health disaster which confronts the whole world.

A few facts should be recalled. AIDS is a STD caused by a virus. The virus has no special predisposition to spread more easily by homosexual intercourse than heterosexual intercourse, as evidenced by the roughly equal sex ration of AIDS cases in Africa. AIDS happened to enter the U.S. populations via homosexual enclaves with a high rate of promiscuous sexual behavior in our large coastal cities in the late seventies. This fact was related to historical accident and "unprotected" promiscuity, and not to homosexual behavior *per se*.

AIDS, like any other STD, is associated with promiscuity and/or occasional sexual acting out. Without condoning such sexual behavior, I think it is true that the use of condoms would significantly reduce disease transmission among the people involved. . . . I hope that the tragic AIDS pandemic which we are now entering does serve to re-emphasize and re-establish the sacred character of genital sexuality and the role of fidelity, honesty, and trust in human sexual relationships — whether heterosexual or homosexual, marital or non-marital. I also hope that those among us . . . who fail at times to live up to their moral goals for sexual behavior do not compound the sin by failing to take whatever precautions are available against transmission of the AIDS virus. . . .

God is not "giving us" AIDS to teach us a lesson in sexuality morality.

THOMAS J. ROSE, M.D.

Squandering capital

Cleveland, Wis.

To the Editors: Thank you for publishing David Carlin's fine piece. We seem to be awash in a sea of principle-less and spineless empathy regarding the AIDS/homosexuality issues, "groundswells" of support being regularly manufactured by such media manipulators as "National Liberal Radio" and "Some Things Considered."

This may just be one "cultural antediluvian" congratulating another in the eyes of those parties whom Mr. Carlin identifies as opposing the commonsense measures he proposes. Yet even they might express some sense of concern as the cultural capital we "antediluvians" conserve is squandered; for even they may suspect that, *après nous, le déluge*.

It's good to be receiving *Commonweal* again. It's like coming home.

JOHN LYON

Unwanted effects

Great Neck, N.Y.

To the Editors: David R. Carlin, Jr., recommends as appropriate measures to combat AIDS, widespread blood tests, and tracing and notifying sexual partners of infected persons. These would be enormously expensive procedures, and I'm not sure if they would have much effect.

Aside from frightening the seropositive person (and where did he get his figure that half of such persons will become sick?; the usual estimate is 10 percent), its value would be felt only if such persons had safer sex (and condoms are not 100 percent safe), or no sexual intercourse. That same practice is advisable for people who are not seropositive, so what is the advantage? The only really safe sex, during which condoms are not required, is with a partner who, you are absolutely certain, has been faithful to you for at least five years, says Surgeon General Koop.

Would such measures strengthen the resolve of those who are seropositive? Maybe, but if the goal is persuading all persons to take appropriate precautions, not just those who are seropositive, would it not make more sense to use the funds to get the message across? And, wouldn't his proposal have the unwanted effect of giving a false sense of security to those who are seronegative?

Carlin speaks of the intellectual cowardice of those who oppose his "obvious public health measures." To me, it is cowardly to avoid the more difficult task: discouraging casual sex and prostitution, and making intravenous drug abuse safer. If we are to be non-judgmental about extra-marital sexual intercourse in order to persuade its practitioners to use condoms, why not do the same to the much smaller number of persons who inject themselves intravenously, by providing easily accessible disposable syringes and needles?

ARTHUR RIFKIN, M.D.

The author replies

To begin with, Dr. Rifkin is a mile off base when he says that only 10 percent of those who test positive for the AIDS virus will eventually develop the disease. Ten percent is the figure public health authorities were using some time back; then they went up to about 35-40 percent; today their rule of thumb figure for public consumption is 50 percent. But if you speak with public health doctors privately, many of them will now say they fear it may be 100 percent — provided, of course, that the person doesn't die in the meantime from some other cause, e.g., a traffic accident or a heart attack. So my figure of 50 percent was both conventional and conservative.

Like many opponents of mandatory testing, Dr. Rifkin objects to the cost, suggesting this money could be better spent educating the public. The unspoken premise here is that there is a fixed amount of money for AIDS and that to raise spending in one area involves a corresponding reduction in another. But this isn't so. The only rational public policy response to AIDS is to spend vastly increased amounts of money on many fronts: education, counseling, testing, research, etc.

Mandatory testing and contact tracing will certainly not stop the spread of AIDS. But I am at a loss to understand how Dr. Rifkin could believe these procedures would have no impact at all. Even if they slow down the spread of the virus only marginally, this will save hundreds of thousands of lives over the years, for the virus spreads exponentially, and every time we convince one person not to pass it on, we save scores of others.

Testing should be accompanied by counseling for those who test positive; by imprisonment for prostitutes who continue to ply their trade after testing posi-

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tive; by criminal sanctions for seropositive persons who engage in sexual intercourse without first advising their partners of this condition; and by segregation of convicted prison inmates who test positive. Needless to say, all this should take place within a framework of law guaranteeing reasonable confidentiality and protecting carriers of the AIDS virus from discrimination in housing, employment and so forth.

DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

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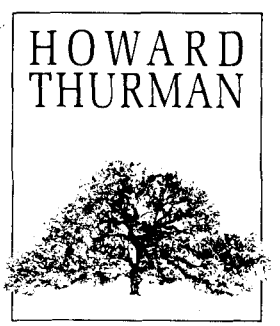

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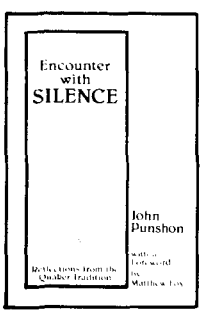

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